# THE COMMUNIST

Vol. XIII OCTOBER, 1934 No. 10

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# THE COMMUNIST

*A Magazine of the Theory and Practice of Marxism-Leninism*

*Published Monthly by the*

Communist Party of the United States of America

Entered as second class matter November 2, 1927, at the Post Office at New York, N. Y., under the act of March 3, 1879. 209

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Make all checks, money orders, and correspondence to THE COMMUNIST, P.O. Box 148, Sta. D (50 E. 13th St.), New York. Subscription rates $2 a year; $1 for six months; foreign and Canada $2.50 a year. Single copies 20c.

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# The Struggle for the United Front

*By* EARL BROWDER

*(Report to Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, September 5-6, 1934)*

COMRADES, I want first to give you a few words of news about the health of Comrade Foster. I just received a letter from him in which he gives us a detailed report on his condition, in which I am sure everyone is interested. Comrade Foster, you will be pleased to hear, has made substantial health gains since he left New York, but the process is slow. He now has a feeling of complete confidence that he is getting well.

He further informs us that he will be returning to New York in two or three weeks, and expects gradually to get in touch with the work again, and gradually, over a long period, resume his work.

I take it for granted that this meeting of the Central Committee will send a message to Comrade Foster, hoping for his quick recovery, and hoping that he will be present at our next meeting.

* * * * *

I will now take up the report of the Central Committee, of the development of the work of the Party since the Eighth National Convention.

## THE DEEPENING CRISIS AND THE DIFFICULTIES OF THE NEW DEAL

All the events since the Eighth National Convention confirm the Party analysis of the course of the crisis, of the direction of the New Deal policies, of the regrouping of class forces that is going on, the rising wave of mass struggles and of the developments towards fascism and war. In these past three months the difficulties of the New Deal policies, the development of their inner contradictions, have come to a head. Precisely out of the successes that have been achieved in accomplishing the central objectives of the New Deal—the restoring of profits to monopoly capital at the expense of the workers and farmers and small capitalists—comes this maturing of the contradictions of the Roosevelt policies. All of these contradictions are sharpening, many of them are coming into open head-on conflict between strata of the bourgeoisie, between various tendencies within the bourgeoisie, and above all, between the two basic class forces, the capitalist class and the working class,



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Dissatisfaction with the New Deal is becoming a general phenomenon throughout all classes. Among the capitalist class, including the highest strata, this dissatisfaction is expressed through, for example, the recently formed Liberty League, a coalition of leading Tory politicians of both old parties; it is shown in the attitude of Hearst and his chain of newspapers, which are leading the attack against the New Deal, although a few months ago Hearst was a declared supporter of Roosevelt.

The dissatisfaction among the petty bourgeoisie found its classical expression in the report of the Darrow Committee on the effects of the N.R.A. on the development of monopoly capital. The facts of the dissatisfaction among the farmers are well known, and even well publicized, being admitted in the administration circles, and tremendous masses of farmers are now in motion against the A.A.A., the crop reduction program, etc.

The dissatisfaction of the workers is expressed primarily in the growing strike wave, and even in the maneuvers of the A. F. of L., which is a most direct lackey of the Roosevelt administration, but is forced, in order to maintain its hold over the masses of members, to join in the general demand for the *reformation of the New Deal.*

The central conflict upon which the New Deal has, one can almost say, broken down, is the question of regulation of labor relations in the industries; the question of Section 7a, problems of the relation of the A. F. of L. and company unions, the contradiction of the decline of earnings in face of rising prices, which has aroused upheaval among the masses. This is typified by outstanding strike struggles in this period in Alabama, in Toledo, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, the Pacific Coast marine strike, the San Francisco general strike, and now the national textile general strike. Other great mass battles are maturing in the immediate future. This was spoken of in a recent issue of the Kiplinger Letter, confidential advice for business men, which remarked that "it would be hard to exaggerate the worry caused Washington officials by labor troubles. The government will not be able to prevent the spread of strikes."

The tempo of this development is accelerated by the economic trends. The whole course of economy in this period has served to emphasize the correctness of Stalin's explanation of the depression into which the capitalist class had entered at the end of 1933, as a special kind of depression. We examined this in some detail in the Eighth Convention of our Party. We can now declare that all developments since then confirm the correctness of our thesis.

There has not been a single sign of development towards recovery. On the contrary, everything points to long-continued depression with ups and downs and unevenness between different industries, localities, etc. This perspective of a long-continued depres-

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sion is also recognized now by the bourgeoisie. Again I quote from the Kiplinger Letter, often the frankest spokesman of the capitalists:

> "Business sentiment has taken a turn for the worse. Prospects for business have dimmed a bit, even allowing for excessive business jitters. Earlier belief that recovery would resume in a healthy fashion this fall is now giving way to fears that any marked revival of business will be delayed until spring of 1935 at the earliest. Relative low level of business will continue through the fall and early winter. High rate of industrial production reached in July, 1933 will not be reached again until sometime in 1935."

Some specific features of the present depression as analyzed at our Eighth Convention are now accentuated—the stimulation of industries through government subsidies has reached into the basic industries very weakly, no expansion of capital investment has taken place, new capital issues are overwhelmingly non-productive in character. Accumulated stocks are again rising, whereas at the Eighth Convention we noted a declining tendency in accumulated stocks. This is especially true in raw materials, due to the relative narrowing of the inner market by the restoration of profits at the expense of the masses. Business indices as a whole are considerably below July, 1933, at the time of the inauguration of the N.R.A. There has been a 30 per cent decline in economy since the N.R.A. went into effect and all indications are that the economic indices are not again reaching the point where they were in July, 1933.

A new economic feature is the drought. This natural disaster which has brought whole sections of the country face to face with famine, has in fact carried out the objectives that were set for the Agricultural Adjustment Act. The A.A.A. had been facing failure due to the offsetting features of many evasions of the crop reduction program carried through by fertilization and mechanization of reduced acreage. But the Roosevelt administration has been seriously embarrassed by the tremendous revelation that the aim of their effort was precisely the same as that condition which was brought about by the drought, which must be recognized as a calamity. The Roosevelt regime declares that while the drought was beneficial, they fear its effects in destroying illusions in the A.A.A.

Unemployment is again heavily increasing. This increase is more rapid than the decline in production, due to the heavy stretch-out and speed-up. Even during the period of the upward movement of the economic index, the increase in employment always lagged behind the increase in production and the lagging continually grew. Now that production is going down and unemployment increasing at a larger rate, the problem of unemployment and all the attendant questions of relief, relief methods, unemployment insurance, etc., are becoming again outstanding problems of millions. Official

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spokesmen of the administration predict 5,000,000 families on the relief rolls this winter, with approximately 4,000,000 families on relief at the present time, with an average of four to five to a family. Problems of maintenance of unemployed are even further intensified by the progressive exhaustion of the resources of those who have been long unemployed, with larger proportions of the unemployed claiming relief.

And, to quote the Kiplinger Service:

> "Unemployment relief next winter will cost more than last winter. Number on rolls will be greater."

While all of these authorities and the capitalist press try to minimize the extent of the problem, they are all forced to recognize the direction in which it is developing. The crisis in the New York relief plans is duplicated more or less intensively everywhere.

The tremendous growth of the movement for the Workers' Unemployment and Social Insurance Bill, H.R. 7598, which is carrying strongholds of conservatism in the A. F. of L., Y.M.C.A.'s, etc., has forced a general acceptance of the principle of unemployment insurance in words by employers.

Big efforts are being made to direct mass sentiment behind this movement to some scheme based upon actuarial principles, as they call it, for protection against *future* unemployment at the cost of the workers. The rising wave of local struggles around relief issues, revival of unemployment councils, unions of relief workers, reflect the crisis in unemployment relief and the bankruptcy of all present relief plans now in operation.

On the basis of these economic and political trends, we must note that the radicalization of the workers, farmers and middle classes is coming to a higher stage, finding newer, broader, more political modes of expression. The basic feature of this is the *general strike* and *solidarity strike* movement that sweeps the industrial localities and even whole industries, like the textile strike. From strikes around small economic issues, it broadens out into political class battles that even raise the whole question of State power, as in San Francisco. The elemental force of the workers' movement sweeps into the broadened stream of this radicalization representative strata of undifferentiated masses such as churches, Y.M.C.A.'s, small home-owners, small depositors, as well as definite middle class groups, intellectuals and professions. To keep this upsurge in safe channels, new forms of demagogy are arising, such as Upton Sinclair's EPIC movement and the Utopians in California. Sinclair's sweeping of the Democratic Party primaries is a distorted reflection of mass radicalization, which obtained a clearer, more direct expression in the

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phenomenal vote of 180,000 for Gallagher, running openly as an independent associate of the Communist Party.

A distinct new feature of the radicalization of the masses is the sharply favorable response that is arising and rapidly spreading to the call for a united front against the capitalist offensive, against fascism and war. We must immediately note that this is accompanied by the equally sharp and rapid spread of measures of fascist suppression of the mass movement which are especially directed against the Communist Party. In the center, as the conscious moving and directive force of the united front movement in all its phases, stands the Communist Party. Our position in this respect is clear and unchallenged. That is why the main fascist attack is against us. Thus, the fascist repressive movement must be judged dialectically. It is a blow against the working class and its vanguard; increases our difficulties, but at the same time it registers the growing effectiveness of our work in mobilizing the masses, in building the united front of struggle, and stimulates the development of the united front.

The A. F. of L., in its open leadership of the anti-Red campaign among the workers, is trying to buy its recognition by the employers through putting itself forward as the bulwark against Communism among the workers. Our great movement for H.R. 7598, the Congress Against War and Fascism, the unexampled Leftward movement of the Youth Congress under Communist influence, the numerous united front actions with locals of the S.P., the successful leadership in vast strike struggles and in innumerable small ones—these are the reasons why the bourgeoisie and its agents, General Hugh Johnson, the Liberty League, William Green and the A. F. of L. bureaucracy, the Elks and Eagles, the American Legion, launched the present nationwide offensive against the Communist Party. This is a characteristic feature of the development of fascism in its first stage. Every political party and grouping in America finds it necessary today to define its attitude towards, or its relation with, the Communist Party as a major question of its whole orientation. Our Party by its correct policy and the growing effectiveness of its work has become an inescapable factor in the political life of America.

The fascist concentration against the Communist Party in the anti-Red drive cannot hide the growing disintegration, confusion and conflicts within the camp of the bourgeoisie. The bi-partisan coalition of the Tories in the Liberty League to the Right, the Sinclair development to the "Left," the breaking away of LaFollette from the Republican Party in Wisconsin, and also the crisis in the S.P.—these are all symptoms of the flux, disintegration, and regroupings of the whole bourgeois camp. The rising mood of revolt among the masses, their radicalization, the mass struggles growing

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broader and deeper in combination with the impact of the world situation, have shattered the whole foundation of the bourgeoisie. We can say, without trying to draw any exact analogies which would lead us astray, but roughly comparing the stages of development, that the situation in the United States in this respect, the atomization, the breaking up into cliques and groups, and the organization of fascist groups among the bourgeoisie, are comparable to the pre-fascist atomization of bourgeois parties in Germany in the period of Bruening.

### THE INNER DIFFERENCES WITHIN THE BOURGEOISIE

Serious dissatisfaction with the development of the N.R.A. has arisen in the past few months in the ranks of the big bourgeoisie. This centers around two points.

First and most important, there is a growing fear that the demagogy in connection with Section 7a, which tended to smother the big strike movements in automobile and steel, is now no longer effective, or is even having the opposite effect. There is a growing demand that the government come out more decisively to prevent strikes before they happen, that the government shall end the ambitions of the A. F. of L. to enter the basic industries. This is not at all because they distrust the good intentions of the A. F. of L. leaders or their desire to prevent strikes. It is rather because the bourgeoisie begins seriously to question the ability of the A. F. of L. leaders to control the mass upsurge of their members. This doubt has grown since the San Francisco and textile strikes.

Secondly, there is a growing conviction that of all of the New Deal policies only three points have seriously contributed to restoring the prosperity of finance capital, namely: (1) inflation; (2) repeal of the anti-trust law and the institution of the control of the big monopolies; and (3) the government subsidies to big business. These sections of the big bourgeoisie became acutely conscious of all of the inner contradictions of capitalism in the form in which they are expressed through the New Deal institutions, the N.R.A., the A.A.A., etc., and the other new structures that have been built up like mushrooms from the New Deal. The idea grows among them, therefore, that inasmuch as these contradictions appear in the building of this new machinery, they can be abolished by doing away with this machinery, and handing the code authorities over directly to big industrialists. Roosevelt undoubtedly sympathizes with them and finds it daily more difficult to find a way out, although he has made many moves and more gestures in that direction.

The emergence of the Liberty League under the slogans "protect the Constitution", etc., is an attempt to influence the Roosevelt administration more sharply toward fascism in this period of reorien-

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tation. It is also a preparation for more serious action in the way of political realignment for the presidential elections in 1936. It is, of course, not a demand for restraining fascist developments. Neither is it concerned with cutting down governmental expenditures which go for big business, for this is considered protection of private property, but it is deeply incensed against the growing expenditures for unemployment relief, even though the amount of relief to the individual unemployed family is steadily going down.

Closely connected with the Liberty League is the position of Hearst and his big chain of newspapers. Hearst openly charges that Roosevelt's administration is more Bolshevik than the Communist Party itself. He attempts to turn the anti-Red crusade, of which he was pioneer and remains the sustained leader, into a mass movement to force the administration sharply to the Right. Approximately the same position is taken by the official Republican leadership, although in many localities the Republican policy is not followed by local leaders wishing to keep more friendly relations with the New Deal.

We must avoid the error of seeing in these divisions merely a "division of labor" carried out by agreed-upon plans by the decisive strata of the bourgeoisie. They are real differences over which the most bitter controversy rages, controversy which may have serious consequences. They cut through all the main bourgeois groups. They seriously impede the development of a united bourgeois policy.

But it would be equally wrong to consider these differences as going any further than the question of how best to throw the burden of the crisis upon the masses for the benefit of finance capital. These differences do not go beyond the policy of monopoly capital.

The pressure to increase the demagogy rather than to decrease it is applied upon those sections of the ruling apparatus which deal most intimately with restraining the mass upsurge and in those places where the problem is hottest for the moment, as, for example, in the LaGuardia Progressive administration in New York, where the number of unemployed workers in New York exceeds the number of unemployed in most capitalist countries—one-fourth of the population depending on the city dole. It is seen in the LaFollette Party in Wisconsin, which is the center of a storm of agrarian unrest; it is seen in Sinclair's capture of the Democratic nomination for Governor in California, as a result of the strikes and the extent of the mass unemployment.

The Roosevelt administration tries to be flexible. It will give way to both forms of pressure. It tries to give the Liberty League and the Hearst elements the essence of what they demand, while giving the masses the old demagogy in ever new forms. Spokesmen for the administration give repeated pledges that "private profits"

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and "business confidence" are their innermost motive and heart's desire. At the same time, Roosevelt agrees to meet Sinclair, and the New York *Herald Tribune* could write, without contradiction, the following frank analysis of the situation:

> "Prior to the primary yesterday, Mr. Roosevelt, it is known, received communications from prominent California Democrats which took Mr. Sinclair's nomination for granted and urged that the national administration be prepared to get behind him. The tenor of this advice was that Mr. Sinclair should be surrounded with practical New Dealers who could keep him from going too far or too fast. It was pointed out that he was bringing into the Democratic Party a great many thousands of votes which otherwise would go to more radical candidates outside of both major parties. . . . According to this analysis of the California political situation which was circulated several days ago among important members of the administration, Mr. Sinclair is a powerful deterrent to the breaking away of large blocks of votes, especially among the unemployed, into the arms of Communism."

That this analysis of Sinclair's role is absolutely correct is proved beyond all doubt, by the fact that over 180,000, most of whom voted for Sinclair, also voted for Gallagher, who was running with the endorsement of the Communist Party. Without Sinclair in this field, most of these votes should have gone for the straight Communist ticket.

Roosevelt, and the bourgeoisie generally, try to draw some advantages out of their mounting inner differences and difficulties. Both the Liberty League and Sinclair are used to try to reburnish the dulling halo of "Savior" about Roosevelt's head. Roosevelt, while yielding to the pressure of the Liberty League, poses as it antagonist; while yielding nothing in deed to the "Left" Sinclair he gives a carefully chosen flow of soft words to bind Sinclair's followers to the New Deal. It is our task to make use of these developments in the opposite way, to expose the inner political unity of finance capital behind all these differences, at the same time showing the unsolvable contradictions of capitalism which they express; espepecially to expose the reactionary utopianism of Sinclair's program; and to bring forward sharply and clearly the revolutionary way out of the crisis, given by the Communist program, upon the basis of an ever more energetic unfolding of the daily struggle for the most immediate needs of the workers.

### LESSONS OF THE MOST RECENT STRIKES

The strike wave which began early in 1934, the first period of which was examined by the Eighth National Convention, has since that time risen to new heights. The strike movement not only grew in number of strikers, intensity and duration of strikes, but also

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qualitatively entered a higher stage with the emergence on a nation-wide scale of a general strike movement. This general strike movement came to the verge of realization in Toledo, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Portland, Seattle. It was realized in San Francisco in a four-day General Strike of solidarity with the Pacific Coast marine workers' struggle of twelve weeks involving the overwhelming mass of all workers in the San Francisco Bay region. At the same time the strike movement further penetrated the deep South and the basic industries. At the present moment a great movement for a nation-wide industrial strike of textile workers has forced their A. F. of L. leaders apparently to submit for the moment to the fighting determination of the rank and file and issue a general strike call for September 4. These struggles, and especially the San Francisco General Strike, mark a new high point in the development of the American working class and are of historic significance even on a world scale. The lessons of these struggles are of first importance for the development of the entire revolutionary movement. The history of these battles must be thoroughly studied and their lessons assimilated by the entire revolutionary movement and the whole working class.

Already at the Eighth Convention the first manifestations of the tendency to mass solidarity of strikes were noted particularly in the local general strike embracing all workers in the small industrial town of Centralia, Illinois.

In May the same tendency rapidly grew in Toledo, Ohio, around the relatively small strike of the Auto Lite Corp. This strike, on the point of being crushed, was suddenly revived by a great solidarity action of mass picketing, initiated and led by the Unemployment Council, involving principally unemployed workers, which completely tied up the plant and made the strike again 100 per cent effective. The declaration of martial law and the throwing of several companies of the Ohio National Guard into the strike area with the consequent killing of two picketers, aroused the entire Toledo working class to action, and a sympathetic attitude even in broad circles of the lower middle class. The slogan issued by the Communist Party for general strike to answer the declaration of martial law, was quickly seized by the trade union membership, which in a period of ten days had forced the adoption of General Strike resolutions in 83 out of 91 trade unions in Toledo. The General Strike was prevented only by a hasty last-minute settlement of the strike demands, on a compromise basis, engineered by the local A. F. of L. bureaucracy after being aided by Muste & Co. to regain the ear of the masses; by the National Labor Board, and put across on the masses with the help of Socialist Party leaders hastily brought from the S.P. Convention in Detroit.

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Similarly in Minneapolis a General Strike movement arose in May as a response to the Employers Association's effort to break the truckmen's strike by the violent attack of a force of deputized business men against the strikers, which resulted in two deaths. Here also the solidarity action was halted by a hastily-contrived settlement, heralded by the Farmer-Labor leaders and their Trotzkyite lieutenants as a glorious victory, but actually a return to the pre-strike conditions while leaving hundreds of strikers victimized.

In Milwaukee a strike of street railway men to stop the dismissal of union members, a movement which seemed hopelessly weak on the first day of the action, was in the second day suddenly swept into 100 per cent effectiveness by a mass solidarity action of 40,000 sympathetic picketers mobilized by the Party and Unemployment Councils, who went to the car barns and into the streets and forcibly stopped all street car movements. The efforts of the police of this Socialist Party-administered city to suppress this mass picketing brought, on the fourth day, the decision of the power housemen to go out in sympathy and an insistent demand in dozens of local unions for a General Strike. The tremendous pressure of this mass movement brought the sudden capitulation of the street railway management on the evening of the fourth day of the strike, which halted the general strike movement.

From these three experiences the General Strike slogan had spread throughout the country. The outstanding lesson, that the mobilization of the class forces of the bourgeoisie against strikes could only be answered by a similar mobilization of working class forces in defense of attacked strikes, even small ones, had spread through every industrial center among all the most active and intelligent workers.

It was with this experience and against this background that the San Francisco General Strike of July came about. This historic action was the climax of the protracted Pacific Coast General Marine Workers' Strike, the special problems of which we examine later on.

The Marine Workers' Strike, which began on May 9, tied up all ports on the Pacific Coast except San Pedro, which was partially operated by scabs. In the beginning of July, after almost two months of complete tie-up of the ports, the Industrial Association and the Ship Owners Union of San Francisco, decided to "open up the port by all means". These means were a planned massacre of striking workers on the streets, in which two strikers were killed and many dozens wounded, in a premeditated firing upon an unarmed crowd. Even previously the solidarity movement had begun in the decision of the truck drivers not to transport scab cargo from the docks. The massacre of July set off a veritable explosion of

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working class indignation and the demand for solidarity action. At the funeral of the slain strikers (one a Communist) a spontaneous procession, estimated as high as 100,000 workers, marched behind the coffins, taking possession of the main streets of San Francisco, causing the police to be completely withdrawn from view in fear that another collision might put the mass movement completely beyond the control of the bourgeoisie. From this demonstration, the slogan of general strike swept through the unions. But not entirely spontaneously. We must emphasize, it swept through the unions with the assistance of organized visits of the unions by representatives of the basic central strike movement, the Marine Workers' Joint Strike Committee.

Against the open opposition of the A. F. of L. local officials of the Central Trades Council, union after union in overwhelming majority was voting for the General Strike. Unable to stem the tide, the local A. F. of L. leaders suddenly took a new tack. Announcing that the General Strike would be considered, they appointed a specially chosen Committee of Strategy composed of the most hard-boiled reactionary officials, who placed themselves at the head of the movement. It was this committee, together with the so-called General Strike Committee, composed not of elected delegates, but of appointed officials, which issued the official call for the general strike.

In the San Francisco general strike, as in the other strikes spoken of, we have a classical example of the Communist thesis, that in the present period of capitalist decline, a stubborn struggle for even the smallest immediate demands of the workers inevitably develops into general class battles, and raises the whole question of State power and the revolutionary solution of the crisis. Beginning in a typical economic struggle over wages and working conditions of longshoremen, there took place, step by step, a concentration of class forces in support of one or the other side which soon aligned practically the entire population into two hostile camps: the capitalist class against the working class, and all intermediate elements towards support of one or the other. It became a well-defined class struggle, a test of strength between the two basic class forces. The economic struggle was transformed into a political struggle of the first magnitude. The working class understood that if it allowed the concentration of capitalist forces to defeat the marine workers, this meant the defeat of the entire working class, general wage cuts, speed-up and worsening of conditions. The capitalist class knew that if the marine workers should win their demands, this would launch a general forward movement of the entire working class which would defeat the capitalist program for their way out of the crisis, a program based upon restoring profits by reducing the general living

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standards of the masses. It was the capitalist class, which, in panic before the rising giant of the class action of the masses, cried out that this strike, which they could have settled very quickly at any moment by the simple expedient of granting the workers' economic demands, was actually a revolutionary uprising organized by the Communist Party to overthrow the whole capitalist system in San Francisco. Of course, this strike did not have revolution as its objective, certainly not a revolution in a single city, but only winning the immediate demands of the workers. The unity of the workers, however, raised before the employers the spectre of working class power, with the potentiality of revolution.

On the side of the workers, their experience was leading them step by step to more serious challenge of the capitalist class, teaching them the necessity of extending the struggle for power, bringing them face to face with the State power as the guardian of capitalist profits and the force driving down the workers' standards; at the same time it was giving the workers a new understanding of their own power and ability to shake the very foundation of capitalist rule. In this sense, the strike was truly the greatest revolutionary event in American labor history.

### LAUNCHING THE TERROR AGAINST THE REDS

After four days, the San Francisco General Strike came to an end. The working class had earned a brilliant victory through its heroic struggle, but it was cheated by a miserable compromise. Not yet fully swung into action, with its fighting spirit high and mounting higher every day, the working class of San Francisco was defeated not so much by the superior strength of the open capitalist forces, but primarily because these worked in close co-operation with the capitalist agents inside the working class, the A. F. of L. leaders who occupied the post of formal leaders of the General Strike. The local A. F. of L. officialdom, headed by Vandeleur & Co., had placed themselves at the head of the General Strike precisely in order to smash it from within, to prevent it from going over their heads, and further hoping to use its betrayal as an instrument to smash simultaneously the prolonged heroic marine workers' battle.

While the strike was betrayed from within by the A. F. of L. leaders, from outside it was attacked by terror unexampled in American history. San Francisco and the Bay area waterfront were military camps. Armed vigilante fascist bands were turned loose against all Left-wing organizations—the Marine Workers Industrial Union, the *Western Worker*, official organ of the strike as well as of the Communist Party, the offices of the Communist Party, International Labor Defense, Workers Ex-Servicemen's League, Workers' Schools, various workers' clubs, etc. The offices were wrecked and their contents destroyed. Homes were invaded, and

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treated in the same manner. Hundreds of militant workers were arrested. These fascist gangs, organized and directed by the police, were followed up by police detachments to finish the job and to arrest the attacked workers. All this was the necessary prelude to forcing through a vote to end the strike by the A. F. of L. leaders.

Precisely in the midst of this terror came William Green with his infamous contribution where he disowned the strike, declaring it was unauthorized and inadvisable. Even under this tremendous assault the strike remained firm and the pressure upon the officialdom by the rank and file was so great that even in the General Strike Committee, composed of officials of all the unions, the decision to end the strike was declared to be carried only by a vote of 191 to 174. Even this slim majority was declared by Harry Bridges, the longshoreman leader, to have been achieved by the last minute rushing in of dozens of new and unaccounted for "members" of the committee. Further, even in this body of officials, in order to obtain this narrow majority, it had been necessary to combine with the campaign of violent suppression and the anti-Red hysteria a series of concessions of a very important character. The original capitalist program of open-shop smashing of the mass trade unions had to be publicly renounced. A few days later, in order to conclude the marine strike, which they had thought to smash through this betrayal, the employers were forced to make further concessions, to agree publicly to treat with all the striking marine unions on all questions in dispute and to acknowledge the Solidarity Pact between the marine unions, whereby they had pledged to stand or fall together, by providing for similar and simultaneous settlement of all demands of all marine unions. Tremendous power, generated by the General Strike movement, was thus effective even in the hour of its betrayal to register some fragments of the victory which had been won by the workers and snatched away from them by their leaders.

The terror campaign against the San Francisco General Strike, which quickly extended throughout the State of California and since has broadened through the entire nation, requires special study because of the far-reaching character which it has taken on. Who initiated, organized and led this campaign? Who was participating in it? It must be registered, first of all, that the signal for the terror was given by General Hugh Johnson, who the night before the raids delivered a speech in the University of California in which he declared that the Communists had gained control of the trade unions and were planning a revolution as a result of the strike. He called upon all patriotic citizens to join together to "exterminate them like rats". General Johnson was declared in the newspapers to be speaking as the personal representative of President Roosevelt.

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It is clear that the Roosevelt regime placed itself at the head of, and accepted full responsibility for, all the fascist outrages that followed. General Johnson was ably seconded by the liberal Secretary of Labor, Madam Perkins, who simultaneously announced a campaign of deportation of all foreign-born workers handed over to her by the local vigilantes and police. The Republican Party, locally, in the State, and nationally, organized a serious competition with the Democratic Party as to which should have the most "credit" for the fascist terror. Upton Sinclair seized the opportunity not to protest against the fascist terror, but to denounce the Communist Party, to disclaim the slightest connection with the hunted "Reds", and to place upon the Communist Party responsibility for the terror. The *New Leader*, organ of the S.P., Right wing, denounced the Communists as being responsible for the breaking of the strike and provoking the fascist terror. Even the "militant" Socialist leader, Norman Thomas, while mildly disapproving of the terror, gave his blessings to the betrayal of the strike with the declaration that "the General Strike was soon called off by Labor itself".

General Johnson's command to the A. F. of L. officials that they should "exterminate the Communists like rats" found a quick response from William Green of the A. F. of L. Executive Council, who publicly proclaimed a campaign of expulsion of all militant elements in the trade unions. This campaign has already resulted in the expulsion of whole local organizations, notably Local No. 499 of the Painters Union in New York. The campaign has been taken up by the American Legion, the fraternal societies of the Elks, Eagles, etc., as well as by all the professional Red-baiting societies throughout the country.

The capitalist press, with Hearst at its head, is carrying on the most vicious incitation to fascist violence against all Reds, which means all militant workers' leaders. The growing list of criminal syndicalist cases reflects the terror as applied by the courts, while dozens of reports come in every day showing a mounting wave of fascist criminal assaults against militant workers. In Oregon the campaign takes such form as the publication of lists of all signers of the Communist election petitions and the inciting of fascist violence against the signers unless they publicly repudiate their signatures. The leaders of the American Legion Convention in California climaxed this hysteria by proposing a concentration camp in the wilds of Alaska for all Reds, a proposal which was widely publicized throughout the country. The terror used to break the San Francisco General Strike has thus been spread over the whole country and serves as an enormous stimulus to the whole tendency toward fascism inaugurated by Roosevelt's New Deal.

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It is becoming clear that the growing strike movement and especially the San Francisco General Strike has brought about a certain crisis in the evolution of the New Deal policies. Already in the early spring of 1934 decisive circles of finance capital had placed a serious check upon the Roosevelt demagogy around Section 7a which was first expressed in the automobile and steel settlements negotiated by Roosevelt with the assistance of William Green. In connection with the automobile settlement Roosevelt declared: "We have charted a new course". The nature of the new course was explained by the auto manufacturers who "were particularly pleased that the clarification of Section 7a seems to uphold their contention in behalf of the company union". But even this new course of the New Deal which was a sharp rebuff to the trade unions in the basic industries, together with all the ensuing maneuvers of National Industrial and Regional Labor Boards of Arbitration Committees, with the wholehearted collaboration of the A. F. of L. officialdom, has not been able to keep down the rising anger of the masses or halt the mounting strike wave. Capitalists generally were willing to accept the Roosevelt demagogy as useful in 1933, after the bank crash when, as General Johnson said: "Both industrial and banking leadership had fallen in the public mind to complete and utter disrepute". But now that their profits are mounting again, while the working class is breaking from control of all their elaborate machinery, they are beginning to ask whether this demagogy has not outlived its usefulness.

This is the spirit behind the fascist terror, behind the newly formed American Liberty League, behind the announcement of the steel industry that it will withdraw from the code in order to evade the application of Section 7a; it is behind the proposals for new legislation against general and sympathetic strikes and for government control of the trade unions, etc.

It is a foregone conclusion that the decision of the leading circles of finance capital on these issues will immediately be carried through by the Roosevelt administration, with each step carefully camouflaged by Roosevelt's sweet smile and soft speech about the necessity to protect human rights and property, etc. While the precise forms of such new features as will be introduced into the New Deal cannot yet be accurately forecast, their general direction is clearly along the lines of further legal limitation upon the trade unions, their effectual exclusion from basic industries of mass production, and further progress of fascization.

### SPECIAL FACTORS IN THE SAN FRANCISCO STRIKE

In addition to those general influences producing general strike sentiment throughout the country, there were special factors at work

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in San Francisco, which, combined with the general factors, brought the general strike into being there in 'Frisco and not elsewhere. It is false to seek to explain the higher stage of the strike movemnt there through any supposed higher level of the radicalization of the workers.

The special factors at work were concrete and measurable things. Chief among them were: First, the San Francisco general strike arose out of a broad industrial general strike of the whole Pacific Coast marine industry. It was thus given a broader base and a sharper appeal than the general strike movement in any other locality. At the same time San Francisco was the *concentration point* of the Pacific Coast marine strike. Second, the strike-breaking A. F. of L. officialdom had no strongholds inside the organizations of the longshoremen, who were the determining driving force in the whole strike movement, while the militant Left-wing elements dominated this strategic center. This factor was due to the extent to which the treachery of the International Longshoremen's Association officials had resulted in wiping out the San Francisco locals for over ten years and with them the entrenched local bureaucracy, substituting for them the company unions. When the I.L.A. locals arose again in 1933, militant elements who built these unions kept them in the control of the rank and file. Third, the extreme open-shop, union-smashing program of the Pacific Coast employers and the government, centering in San Francisco, who had refused to adopt the Roosevelt demagogy of the New Deal, with its tactic of combining corruption of trade union officialdom, arbitration boards, etc., and double-meaning promises to the workers, and had by its open threats roused all existing trade unions to the realization of immediate life-and-death danger. The Left-wing and Communist groupings, small and of comparatively recent origin, were thus enabled to exercise a mass influence out of the ordinary proportion to their number and maturity. This favorable relation of forces placed the revolutionary elements, with Communists in the center, at the head of this great elementary upheaval.

What were the decisive features of the Pacific Coast marine strike? The marine workers on the Pacific Coast were able to develop a general strike movement while on the Atlantic Coast and in the Gulf ports, although suffering even worse conditions, they could not do so. This is due to the relatively weaker position of the American Federation of Labor officialdom, in the first place the officials of the International Longshoremen's Association, headed by Joseph Ryan of New York. This weak position was not confined to San Francisco, but arose out of the betrayal of the longshoremen's and seamen's strike in 1920-1922. In those struggles the marine workers had learned two main lessons, namely: (1) that

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divided action and leadership among the marine unions, faced with a united enemy, brought defeat, and (2) that this division was deepened and accentuated by the national officials of their own unions. In some of the local unions that survived the period since 1922, militant rank and file elements thus came to leadership. To this Left-wing nucleus was added in 1933 the decisive influence of the rank and file militants who revived the longshoremen's union in San Francisco, Seattle, Portland, San Diego, San Pedro, and which in San Francisco played the decisive role from the beginning.

Thus it was that the regular routine N.R.A. strike settlements broke down in the Pacific Coast marine strike. Through rank-and-file initiative the Pacific Coast Conference was held in February, formulated demands and decided upon strike action to enforce them. The I.L.A. officials, unable to head off the movement, in March appealed to Roosevelt for direct intervention. Roosevelt's promise to adjust the demands succeeded in postponing the strike, but after two months of the usual N.R.A. procedure, producing nothing for the workers, the local unions took matters into their own hands and called the strike on May 9.

It is interesting to note that on May 9 when the decision for strike was taken by the San Francisco longshoremen, this decision came as a surprise to the officials of the A. F. of L. and the International Longshoremen's Association, and *at the same moment came as a surprise to the revolutionary group, the leader of which spoke against the decision to call the strike at that moment.*

### HOW THE M.W.I.U. SPREAD THE STRIKE

Up to the point of the beginning of the strike, the M.W.I.U. had played a minor role. In the organization of the longshoremen it had thrown its full support to those militants who had revived and reorganized the International Longshoremens Association's locals, and had refrained from all competitive organization among them, concentrating its independent organizational activities upon the seamen, who were almost entirely unorganized. The International Seamen's Union had relatively few members. Its activities were confined to that of a group of hard-boiled trade union bureaucrats, typified by Paul Scharrenberg, maintained not by the workers, but pursuing independent careers as labor politicians. The I.S.U. officials allowed no membership meetings. They even refused to recruit new members. They set themselves solidly against the seamen being involved in the strike. But with the docks tied up, the seamen on every ship that came to port, burning with their own grievances, fired by the dockers' example, were eager for strike action. The only organizing center they could find was the Marine Workers Industrial Union, which openly entered the situation, calling the seamen to

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strike, opened recruiting halls, recruited over 800 seamen in a brief time, tying up every ship which came into port. This intervention of the M.W.I.U. was decisive in breaking the official A. F. of L. embargo on general action in the industry. In order to maintain even a pretense of representing the seamen, the I.S.U. was forced, finally, to declare itself on May 19 for the strike and begin recruiting and call meetings. As a result of this the small unions of harbor workers of various crafts were also soon drawn into a complete industrial general strike. It was thus that the energetic action of an independent industrial union was the essential factor that brought into the battle the other A. F. of L. unions, made the strike general, and laid the basis for the next forward step, the setting up of the Joint Strike Committee of all unions, and the signing of a Solidarity Pact, between all the striking organizations.

It was the conscious and growing spirit of industrial solidarity among all the marine crafts, eventually crystallized during the course of the strike in the Joint Strike Committee and the Solidarity Pact, which again and again defeated all efforts of Joseph Ryan, International Longshoremen's Association head, and Edward McGrady, Roosevelt's representative, to bring about a separate settlement for longshoremen along the lines of the notorious auto and steel industry settlements. It was this which after the defeat of Ryan's second attempt to sell out the strike enabled the militants to carry through the slogan "All Power to the Rank and File Strike Committee" and publicly declare that Ryan had no right to speak for the strikers, repudiating him in a great public mass meeting. These events demonstrated the enormous importance and power of elected strike committees responsible and reporting back to the members and taking complete control of strike negotiations and settlements.

### THE PROBLEMS OF THE ORGANIZED RETREAT

The San Francisco General Strike in the ninth week of the marine workers' struggle, brought the whole marine movement to a climax. The betrayal of the General Strike discouraged and choked off similar solidarity movements on the verge of explosion in Portland and Seattle. The expressed intention of the Vandeleur gang of betrayers was to smash not only the general strike movement, but also the whole Pacific Coast marine strike and take the marine unions out of the hands of the militant rank and file. It was the firm determination of the trade union bureaucrats and the employers that the ending of the San Francisco General Strike would be followed by a demoralized rout of the marine workers. But they reckoned without the steadying influence of the organized rank and file strike committees, and the firm guidance given by the Communist Party in this critical moment. It was, however, the judg-

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ment of the strike committees that under these conditions, the strike could not hold out much longer. They decided that a retreat was necessary, but this retreat was an organized one, salvaging all possible gains, however small, out of the betrayal by the officialdom, and guarding to the last moment, as a matter of proletarian honor, the sacredness of the Solidarity Pact between the marine unions.

The strikers and their committees stood firm, with the result that after a few days the capitalists announced new concessions to the workers. This appeared in the newspapers in the extraordinary form of a joint statement issued by a meeting of the Industrial Association, the Ship-Owners Union, all independent shipping companies, and the six daily newspapers in the San Francisco Bay area. This statement in substance recognized the Solidarity Pact of the marine unions by, for the first time, agreeing to settle with all the unions simultaneously and by the same procedure. Previously they had stood fast for arbitrating only the demands of the longshoremen and refusing any consideration to the demands of the other unions. They further agreed to the hiring of workers without discrimination at the docks, thus in effect abolishing the company-union hiring system, although not accepting the demand for union-controlled hiring halls.

On the basis of these concessions, they proposed all demands relating to wages and working conditions be submitted to the arbitration of the President's Board. The Strike Committee agreed to submit these questions to a referendum of the membership, at the same time passing a special motion reaffirming the Solidarity Pact which required that an affirmative vote by the longshoremen would only take effect when and if the proposal was ratified by the other unions involved. The marine strike continued solid for another week, while the votes were being taken on the entire coast and organizational guarantees established for the simultaneous return of all marine unions in all ports. The ending of the marine strike is an outstanding example of orderly retreat in a defeated strike.

### THE ROLE OF THE COMMUNIST PARTY IN THE STRIKES

That the open shop offensive of the California employers was beaten back and the trade union movement on the Coast generally is stronger than ever, is in the first place to the credit of the Communist Party which placed itself at the head of the militant rank and file, helping them to find organizational forms for their struggle, to establish rank and file leadership, to defeat the intrigues of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy in many critical moments of the strike, and when the strike was finally betrayed, leading them in orderly retreat which salvaged some basic gains from the struggle.

It was the concentration work of the Communist Party on the

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waterfront, especially in San Francisco and Seattle, which consolidated the nucleus of militant leadership in 1932 and 1933, which in February, 1934, crystallized in a Coast-wide rank and file delegates' conference that organized the marine strike, making it general along the whole Coast. It was the stubborn struggle of this leadership which kept the strike out of the hands of Joseph Ryan of the I.L.A., and defeated his repeated attempts to sell out the strike, break up the solidarity of the marine unions, and send them back to work demoralized and disrupted. It was this solid leadership in the heart of the marine strike, that made it possible to develop the general strike movement against the will of the A. F. of L. leaders in San Francisco, Vandeleur & Co. The work of the Communist Party brought this elemental upheaval to a higher level of consciousness and organization than any previous great labor struggle in America.

With the rise of the anti-Communist terror, at the ending of the strike, the Party went through a testing by fire, all along the Coast. It was driven underground, all known premises destroyed, printing plant burned down in San Francisco, hundreds assaulted by fascist vigilantes, more hundreds thrown into prison, private homes were violated and smashed, vigilante and police dragnets hunted down all known Communists and sympathizers, even the homes of suspected middle and upper class sympathizers were attacked.

The Party stood up very well under these attacks, especially in San Francisco and Seattle. The Party committees never ceased to function, nor lost their connections with the main body of the lower organizations. Connection with the masses was maintained by a constant stream of leaflets, both from the District Committees and from the units on their own initiative. We must verify all of these things because as yet we have only very fragmentary reports and we should have further reports of the functioning of the Party organizations, especially the lower organs of the Party during the strike. However, we can say that there was sustained connection with the masses through the issuance of literature, initiative by the lower organs in getting out leaflets, etc. We also have what is usually a very important indicator for the Center—the continued growth of the dues payments throughout this period down to today.

Already on August 1 in San Francisco the Party broke through the terror, holding an open public meeting under the auspices of the American League Against War and Fascism; within two weeks the *Western Worker* appeared again, as well as the *Voice of Action* in Seattle. In both of these main cities where the terror was sharpest, the Party came through this most severe test in a manner which must obtain our approval. The Party never ceased to function. We can be proud of the fact that these two important districts,

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in this most difficult situation, showed their ability in this respect. Similar conditions have existed in Alabama, District 17, in connection with the strike movement there, with arrests, confiscation of the *Southern Worker*, etc. Here also a young district, with relatively few members, stood up excellently and strengthened the Party during the struggle. The same sort of experience can be reported from Southern Illinois, which has gone through an exactly similar period of fascist terror, and in which the Party has been strengthened in the course of the fight.

### WEAKNESSES AND MISTAKES IN THE STRIKES

However, we must not spend too much time congratulating ourselves upon our achievements. More important for us is to give some detailed attention to the mistakes and weaknesses of our Party, in the first place of the Party leadership, in the most important struggle in San Francisco. There are such weaknesses, mistakes, we must say, notwithstanding the excellent work of the Party, a series of weaknesses and mistakes showed themselves in the course of the strike. In conducting a self-critical examination, we by no means want to set up a standard of perfection. We do not demand that our comrades shall be all-conquering heroes—that is too much to demand of our comrades. We cannot demand that they shall always be victorious, or that they always defeat the enemy the moment he comes on the scene. It is not in this sense we make our criticism. But we must do our best always to see that no mistakes of political orientation shall serve to weaken the struggle.

Our comrades in California made such mistakes of orientation—serious ones. In the struggle against the A. F. of L. official strike-breakers, our leading cadres saw the main danger to be guarded against as coming from the "Left", in the form of stupid or clumsy or untimely exposure, which the masses would not be prepared to accept. They saw no danger or very little, from the Right; from lagging behind in the exposure, or entirely failing in this central task. Against "Left" deviations the comrades were very, very sensitive. But Right deviations they could not see at all. As a result, they made Right deviations of the most serious kind.

When Ryan went to the Coast to make his first sell-out effort, our comrades were of the opinion that his past record of strike-breaking activities, which should have been popularized among the broadest masses before he arrived, was not of particular advantage to the masses in California. The comrades seemed to think that anything happening outside of California was not a legitimate subject for criticism inside of California; they had no warning lesson to the strikers to whom Ryan was coming as their international president. When Ryan was defeated in his first sell-out, and retreated,

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in order to gain a second chance to sell out, the opinion was expressed, and not fought against, that this maneuver of Ryan's should be greeted as a conversion of Ryan to the point of view of the Strike Committee, under the illusion that if this was not true, it was at least clever tactics for us to make it seem that way!

This completely wrong conception of what is clever tactics was not criticized by our comrades, except in the form of making the expression of it more vague when it got into the *Strike Bulletin*. When the Central Committee and the *Daily Worker* criticized this vague formulation and pointed out what was behind it, the comrades were quite indignant against us. They thought we were hunting for small things to be hyper-critical about. They even protested against us in the columns of the *Western Worker*. They did not understand the serious danger behind this seemingly small matter. There was even rising (as in the case of Comrade Morris, editor of the *Western Worker*, who expressed this tendency in a sharp form) something like a theory that precisely what the Central Committee was pointing out as weaknesses and mistakes were really the greatest virtues of the leadership in California. Comrade Morris seemed to think that these mistakes out there were destined to become the dominating line of the Party nationally in its trade union work, and were correcting the whole Party's trade union line.

Comrade Jackson, a very militant, courageous comrade, whom we all value very much, under the influence of this tendency in the California leadership, wrote a letter to the Central Committee after we had raised a few points of criticism, in which he invited us to leave the direction of the strike in the hands of those on the scene, and for the Central Committee to busy itself with the more fruitful tasks of organizing strike relief on a national scale!

Comrade Darcy's article in *The Communist* of July, while very valuable for the information it contained, and treating many separate questions correctly, took its main orientation from this mistaken point of view, which even brought an approving thesis from the Lovestone group, who saw in this some concession to their trade union line.

It was precisely at the moment when we raised these questions with the California comrades that the General Strike movement began to rise in San Francisco. And here we received the conclusive proof that our misgivings were well-founded. Before that, our comrades thought they had a complete answer to all criticism; they said: "You say we don't criticize Ryan sufficiently. But look, we kicked him out, we drove him out of San Francisco". And the comrades thought that closed the question. But came the General Strike, and there we perceived the proofs of our position. The comrades carried on practically no preparations to expose in any

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decisive manner the role of the bureaucrats of the Central Labor Council. Some agitational material directed against them beforehand, was directed exclusively to attacking their opposition to the General Strike, but not one word of the greater danger of these fakers at the head of the General Strike movement. When these fakers suddenly made a maneuver to head the movement; even while they were still openly opposed, by appointing this so-called Committee on Strategy, our marine workers were so unprepared for this maneuver that the mere announcement of it was sufficient for them to practically disband the rank and file conference that had been called under our leadership to organize the General Strike, to take no decisions in that conference in spite of the demands from the rank and file. Precisely at the moment when the General Strike movement was coming to a head, when the moral leadership of the masses was absolutely in the hands of the leaders of the marine strike committee, when the Vandeleur family of fakers was isolated from the masses and stood exposed before them as opponents of the General Strike movement for which the whole masses had declared themselves—*at that moment* our leaders declared that inasmuch as Vandeleur and Co. had set up a committee on strategy, we handed the General Strike movement over into their hands.

When the Committee on Strategy, seeing that the movement was going over their heads, came out a few days later for the General Strike, our comrades had laid absolutely no basis for any struggle to elect a General Strike Committee from below. It is true appeals were made for the election of such committees, but the rank and file certainly didn't feel—had not been prepared to feel—that this was such a burning issue it should have to be the subject of struggle inside the unions. And no such struggles took place.

It was impossible afterward to remedy the fatal weakness of those 24 hours, when we handed over the leadership of the masses, that was in our hands, into the hands of these discredited fakers.

We have no guarantee, of course, that even the best policy would have succeeded in pulling this leadership from the head of the general strike. But we know that we could have been much stronger, and that by this wrong policy we certainly were guaranteed defeat. Most surely a serious effort to lead the general strike, to take it out of the hands, from the beginning, of Vandeleur & Co., would have strengthened our position many times, have increased the vitality of the general strike so that it would have lasted more than four days—five, six, eight days, stimulated the general strike movement in Portland and Seattle into activity instead of serving to choke them off by giving them an example of a broken general strike. Certainly our whole position would have been improved, the power of the trade unions would have increased, the concessions

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which were forced out of the employers made more far-reaching, and generally the interests of the workers would have been advanced, the leadership of the workers would have been strengthened.

The comrades in Seattle came out with a more bold policy—at the same time our positions in Seattle were not so strong. Most of the work had to be done from the outside, that is to say, by Party leaflets rather than through inside official positions in the strike apparatus. Comrade Darcy wrongly concludes that our stronger position in the San Francisco strike was a result of our more timid (or, as he would say, more skillful) criticism—that our weakness in Seattle was because of our more bold criticism. But we must reject any such theory. Precisely because of their superior position in San Francisco they could more boldly and effectively carry out this criticism.

When we demand a policy of bold criticism no one can accuse us of asking for stupid, clumsy, untimely criticism. We demand that the criticism be as intelligent, as skillful as possible, that we choose the right moment. But we must insist that in choosing the right moment we do not wait so long for that right moment that we find, as in the San Francisco General Strike, for example, that our criticism and warning against the Vandeleurs come after the damage has been done. Here we could quote the old saying that when thieves are around, it is better to lock the barn door before the horse has been stolen.

We must say that in the last days of the strike, our California comrades responded to the pressure of the Central Committee, they improved their work in many respects. Also they made some steps in overcoming the weakness in which the Party appeared before the workers in its own name. But we have not yet come to a full understanding of the basic mistake and serious correction of it. Comrade Darcy, even in republishing his article from *The Communist* in the *Western Worker*, appended an editorial which he thought would cover all this criticism by admitting weakness in the matter of criticism of the A. F. of L. officials. The whole character of this comment tends to reduce this to a point of minor importance and the note fails to correct the basic error of the article, as a whole. Comrade Darcy wants to pass it off by remarking that the language was not strong enough and such minor aspects of the question. We are not concerned with the question of strong language, although language too becomes important if it becomes too weak to express our political ideas. In California we must say that at critical moments there was political weakness in our directives for the struggle to the masses—*a political weakness in identifying the most dangerous* enemies of the working class, concentrating the fire against these most dangerous enemies. That is what we are criticizing. The

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California district must study these experiences. Precisely the absence of sufficient political discussion of such problems before and during the strike is the reason why we have such mistakes and why we fail to correct them quickly enough when they appear, or why we resist sometimes such criticism as the Central Committee tried to give towards correcting such mistakes.

### PROBLEMS OF THE UNITED FRONT

I want to review briefly some of the problems of the movement for united action—building the united front. The comrades are familiar with the various proposals that we have made to the Socialist Party National Executive Committee. We are also familiar with the correspondence that developed on these proposals with Norman Thomas, and the action taken just a few days ago by the National Executive Committee in its Milwaukee meeting.

Perhaps we should give a brief characterization of the N.E.C.'s decision as it was reported in the New York *Times*. We have not yet received an official letter that they are reported to have sent to us. Briefly, the action as reported is a rejection of the united front on the grounds that the united front with the Communists would endanger their united front with the A. F. of L. bureaucrats. They cover this up with a platonic endorsement of the idea of a united front, what a good thing it would be if it were possible, and bring out some of the stock tricks to avoid squarely meeting the issue—united action on specific questions. Nowhere do they mention their attitude towards the measures for which we propose united action.

We have already discussed this question in the Polburo. In this morning's *Daily Worker* you have an editorial which gives the main lines of our answer to the Socialist Party decision. I must mention in passing, however, that in this editorial there is one mistake, when in speaking of the concrete proposals which we make to the Socialist Party, the editorial speaks of these as "conditions" of the united front. This is wrong. We never made "conditions". We made proposals, which we are ready to discuss to consider any modifications or limitations that the S.P. wanted to make with regard to them, and to deal with all, or a part, or a single one of these issues. In addition to this editorial, we expect to have within the next few days a formal answer to the Socialist Party, as soon as possible, after we receive their official letter.

In the formal answer we propose to take up precisely as the center of our letter, that question they expressed in the words: "No united action on specific issues is possible between Socialist and Communists except on a basis which also gives hope of ending fratricidal strife within the trade union movement".

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We propose that we will quote this from their letter, and raise very sharply a demand for a further explanation of what they mean by this. We will say that there are two possible interpretations of this. It may mean elimination of the fratricidal strife between workers who follow the two parties—the Socialist Party and the Communist Party—in which case we are for the ending of this fratricidal strife and are ready to take all measures necessary to end it and bring all workers together against their common enemy.

On the other hand, this formulation may mean, and to many people it does mean, the ending of the struggle by the Communists against the policy of William Green, Matthew Woll, John L. Lewis, McMahon and Co.—the official leadership of the A. F. of L. Perhaps it means, and for some it certainly means, the demand for the extension of the united front to include those who are part of the Roosevelt governmental machine. And we declare that if this is what they mean by the united front, or conditions for the united front, this condition the Communists will never accept, because this condition is a united front against the working class, making permanent the split in the working class. The fight for the unity of the working class is precisely against this.

We can make use of our letter to the Socialist Party in a broader leaflet which we propose to issue, including this letter, and giving further elaboration of the answers to all of the arguments of the enemies of the united front. This letter is to be addressed to the membership and followers of the Socialist Party and distributed in many hundreds of thousands of copies. We further propose that we will have a special pamphlet dealing with the history of our fight for the united front, especially since March, 1933, reprinting all of our documents and correspondence with the Socialist Party, etc., down to these last letters. A sort of a handbook on the history of this struggle in the United States, a cheap pamphlet, perhaps two or three cents, especially for sale among the S.P. followers, as well as for the better education of our whole Party on this question.

We further propose that in every locality the comrades shall engage in an intensified campaign to approach the lower organizations of the Socialist Party. We must absolutely eliminate any tendency to react to this question by saying, now that the N.E.C. has spoken, we are through with the chapter to win the Socialist Party. Quite to the contrary is our program. This merely opens new efforts to win every branch and member of the Socialist Party from below to the united front.

Any hope of swinging the Socialist Party as a whole and any kind of united action depends entirely upon this basic activity from below. If we do this basic work from below, we do not have to worry as to whether the Socialist Party leadership ever agrees to the

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united front or not. Because if we do this work from below, we will get the membership, and if we get the membership for united action, we should not worry as to what the leaders are doing. We will worry about them to the extent that they keep their followers away from united struggle.

In addition, we propose that a series of meetings, at least one big meeting in each important district be held at which leading comrades shall report to the workers on this question, inviting leaders of the Socialist Party to come and state their case to the assembled workers, with special attention to get members and followers of the Socialist Party to these meetings.

We must say that in these past months our Party is beginning to understand that for us the united front is a very serious matter. It is a question of fundamental strategy. It is a matter of a long time struggle, a long time perspective, a long time policy. It is not a mere trick in the struggle against the misleaders. It is a basic policy of struggle for the class unity of the workers against the bourgeoisie. Because we more thoroughly understand it in this sense, we are making progress. We have serious developments in the lower ranks of the Socialist Party in practically setting up united front actions—in New Orleans the united front of our Party and the Socialist Party in the magnificent mass demonstration right in between the lines of the rival armed factions of the Democratic Party of Louisiana, demanding that the State and city finances which are being spent in this factional battle over the spoils of corruption should be given to the unemployed, for the relief which had been cut off. This action is being followed up by systematic collaboration by the two parties in New Orleans on current issues, on the calling of a local congress of the American League Against War and Fascism to prepare for the Chicago Congress, etc. In Camden, N. J., the united front August 1 anti-war demonstration was carried out successfully with the participation of the Socialist Party and the Communist Party. A growing number of individual Socialist workers are entering into our struggles; dozen of organizations have demanded of the N.E.C. that it act favorably on our proposals.

The greatest progress has been made among the youth. Without any formal negotiations the Y.P.S.L. and the Y.C.L. already find themselves standing upon an agreed platform. This achievement came out of the struggle against the fascist Central Bureau which called the American Youth Congress in which the anti-fascist united front won a complete victory in winning over almost the entire body of delegates to a program entirely opposed to the one proposed by the leaders, with government support, adopting instead a program of struggle against war and fascism, and for the immediate needs of the youth, including unemployment insurance, etc.

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This victory, the basis of which had already been laid by the Youth Section of the American League Against War and Fascism which was already a growing united front from below, reaching all strata of youth, now comprises one million seven hundred thousand, ranging from Y.M.C.A.'s, Y.W.C.A.'s, church youth organizations, trade union youth sections, settlement houses, etc., clear down to the Y.P.S.L. and Y.C.L. In this, the political center of gravity is the work of our Y.C.L. Practically all the basic proposals and policy came from us or from those circles influenced by us through the unanimous support of this broad youth movement.

The growing movement for united action in the trade union movement is a characteristic feature of the day. In the steel industry, united front conferences included the Steel and Metal Workers Industrial Union and the Amalgamated Association of Iron, Steel and Tin Workers, in the period of preparations for the strike later choked off by the officials. In the auto industry, serious work in this direction is beginning in Cleveland. In the fur industry, a group of shops are carrying out a united strike of both the A. F. of L. and T.U.U.L. unions, in spite of the bitter opposition of the A. F. of L. officials. In the shoe industry, the struggle for a single industrial union is making progress in spite of the obstacles placed by the reactionary section of the officialdom and their Lovestoneite allies. In the preparations for the great textile strike and in the heat of its first days, we have succeeded in making some decisive moves for unity in Paterson, with possibilities in other places, which had been impossible hitherto when the masses were not in motion. In Paterson our small Textile Workers Union has amalgamated with the United Textile Workers' locals, with two of our outstanding leaders placed on the executive board, membership secured by exchange of cards, with full rights.

The key point in the whole united front struggle at the moment is the Second U. S. Congress Against War and Fascism to be held in Chicago, September 28-30. In connection with this is a special Youth Congress called by the Youth Section. In the American League Against War and Fascism and in this Congress, we have a broad united front which met and defeated the attempts made to disrupt it last spring. We must say that the Communists have not given the League the help and attention that it deserves and there has been too much of a tendency to place the daily functioning of the League into the laps of the middle class elements.

These elements are valuable; their contribution to the League has been considerable, but they will themselves be the first to admit that the most important work of the League—rooting it among the workers in the basic and war industries, cannot be done by them, but only the trade unions and workers' organizations, and first of all

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by the Communists. The final work of the Congress in the next three weeks must mark a decisive improvement in the work in this field—engaging of the workers' organizations in this Congress and into active affiliation in the American League.

The biggest political struggle now going on in the United States is the fight for unemployment insurance. The great movement for the Workers' Bill is now taking on a broader form with the preparations for the Social Security Congress in Washington at the time the U. S. Congress opens. It is clear that the time is ripe for broadening the organizational base of the movement such as is proposed in this Congress for Social Security. The sweep of support for the Bill in the A. F. of L. unions which has carried unanimous endorsement in five national union conventions—Molders Union, Amalgamated Association, United Textile Workers, Mine, Mill and Smelter Workers Union, Full Fashioned Hosiery Workers; the endorsement by the City Councils of 48 cities and towns, including Milwaukee, Minneapolis, Buffalo, Canton, Toledo, St. Louis, Bridgeport, Portland, Des Moines, Allentown, Rockford—in 15 States, endorsement by over 5,000 outstanding professionals; the American Newspaper Guild, innumerable locals of the S.P. and lately Norman Thomas; the Farmer-Labor Party of Minnesota; practically all important independent unions, including Progressive Miners; by practically all mass unemployed organizations, even those under the control of the enemies of the Bill, who have been forced by mass pressure to endorse it. All these things—and we must mention the American Youth Congress which unanimously endorsed the Bill—all this disclosed a mass support for our Bill which if it can be concentrated and centralized will be a mighty power to force the adoption of this Bill at the coming session of Congress next January.

We have many questions coming up out of this movement for united front which we have to clarify continually to our Party. We find obstacles being placed in the way, questions being raised as to whether we are not making serious opportunistic deviations when we reach out and get these masses into these movements. For example: we have questions raised around the participation of Father Devine, the "Negro God", in the anti-war movement. Father Devine brought his followers into the August 4 demonstration of the American League Against War and Fascism; previous to that in the demonstration of National Youth Day, and the participation of this section with its fantastic slogans aroused very grave doubts in the minds of many comrades whether it wasn't a serious mistake to allow these religious fanatics to march in our parade with their slogans: "Father Devine is God"; "Father Devine Will Stop War", etc.

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We have answered this question in editorials in the *Daily Worker*. We must emphasize the correctness of this answer which we have given to point out that this is not a special, isolated problem. This problem is perhaps an exaggerated example of the whole problem of reaching the backward masses and bringing them into participation with the most advanced section of the working class in revolutionary struggles. This is our task—not only to bring in the already politically developed vanguard of the workers, but to bring in the millions of masses who will bring with them all their religious superstition, all of their reactionary ideology and to clarify them and to give them political consciousness in the course of the fight. This is the basic task of the united front; and don't think that this merely applies in the aspect of the fight against superstition among the Negroes. You will find exactly the same religious ideology in broad sections of the white working class, and especially you will find it among the broad masses in the Middle West and West of the United States. I grew up right in the midst of just such religious fantacism, and when I was a boy, it was taken for granted that if you were a socialist, you must at the same time explain which one of the religious sects you belonged to. That went along with socialism in Kansas in the period of 1906-1910. This condition is not over. Many workers moving into the struggle are very often carrying with them some extreme religious prejudices. We have to learn to bring them into the struggle and in the process of the struggle to educate them; not first to educate them and make good Leninists of them and then bring them into the Party.

The mass demand for united action is clearly growing into a mighty movement. This is even moving such "advocates of unity" as the Muste group. These estimable gentlemen only a year ago, on two occasions, met with us in formal open conferences of delegates from many organizations, and pledged themselves to united action for the Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill, for unification of the mass organizations of the unemployed, and for the fight against war and fascism in the American League, whose program was produced by a committee of which Muste was chairman; but they didn't seem to take these public pledges very seriously, never did anything to carry them out, and after months of sabotage they broke away from these united front agreements without any explanation. Now, we received a letter from Mr. Muste and Mr. Budenz. They propose to start a long proceeding of negotiations with us and the S.P., together with their Trotzkyite and Lovestoneite friends, at what they call a "round table" on how to get unity. These gentlemen should understand that the best way to get unity is to carry out agreements when they are made. However, if mass pressure from below is again moving them from their position of open

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sabotage, we will not give them a negative answer. They deserve serious attention as long as they still exercise some mass influence among the unemployed in three states. We shall propose that those issues closest to the masses whom they influence, namely, the Workers' Bill, the unity of unemployed organizations—these should be made the beginning of some real actions toward unity without wasting too much time in again talking over the state of the whole world. Let them take one single move toward united action among the masses and our faith in their serious support of a more general unity will be raised above zero. Our attitude toward all minor groupings, or leaders, such as the Musteites, is determined by the question whether they have any mass following and where, and on the issues that relate to the daily life of the masses that follow them, we will negotiate united actions with them. But by no means do we accept the idea which is being carefully cultivated by enemies of united action, that the united front means to bring the S.P. and C.P. together with the small groups of renegade leaders like the Trotzkyites, the Lovestoneites, the Musteites, the Gitlowites, the Weisbordites, etc., etc. We consider that such united front has absolutely nothing in common with the needs of the masses. In this respect we have an illuminating example of the mistake made by the youth in Belgium. Over there, the Y.C.L., the Belgian Y.C.L., met with the Socialist Youth organization and the Socialist Youth brought forward a proposal as the basis for the united front that they come out for the defense of Trotzky, for the protection of Trotzky against the "persecution" that the capitalists were inflicting upon him. And our Young Communists in their desire for unity at any cost signed their names to the pledge for the defense of Trotzky. That is, to defend the unity of the working class, they would defend the leader of the forces of counter-revolution among the working class. What masses of workers they expect to reach with such a slogan as this is hard to see, because all the Trotzky organizations in all the world combined certainly do not run into even a few thousand. In the face of the burning issues of the class struggle and the fight for bread and civil rights, and against war, against fascism, these people have the nerve to bring forward slogans for the defense of Trotzky, and we have comrades who are even ready to fall for such things! We have to use this example from Belgium as a very severe warning to us against such dangers which will arise here also.

Now, a few words on the textile strike. I refer you to the basic policy which has been outlined in the editorials of the *Daily Worker* to emphasize also that these editorials are political directives of the Polburo and Central Committee. Evidently our Party does not understand this fully. We find district leaderships of the Party coming to political conclusions and acting upon them in exactly the

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opposite sense to the editorials of the *Daily Worker*. We had this in the preparation for the textile strike. The line which we put forward in the *Daily Worker* and also by many special directives to the districts, was the line of preparing for strike struggle. The comrades, however, talked it over among themselves, decided that these A. F. of L. bureaucrats will never lead a real fight, there won't be any real strike; why then should we prepare for it?—it is a waste of time and energy, and nothing was done. Exactly nothing. The comrades were convinced there would be no strike, no matter what we said from the Center, and so they acted upon their conviction. This is really a serious problem for us, comrades, and it represents one of those serious political weaknesses that in different forms we have hammered at time and time again, this idea that the bureaucrats won't lead any struggles. Of course, there will be no struggles if it depends upon the bureaucrats; but it does not depend upon the bureaucrats. It depends upon the masses. And when the masses are going into the struggle anyway, the bureaucrats go along and head the struggle, and even call the struggle, in order to bring it to an end more quickly. If we believe only that they will never lead the struggle, we disarm ourselves in the fight against the misleaders, as the comrades did in San Francisco in regard to Vandeleur and the general strike. They only shouted that Vandeleur is against the general strike; they did not point out how Vandeleur can mislead the general strike. The comrades make exactly the same mistake in the textile situation. This is no way to fight against the misleaders, this strengthens the bureaucracy whenever the fight really gets under way and prevents us from mobilizing the opposition to block the betrayal of the struggle.

[Comrade Browder's discussion of our tasks in connection with work in the company unions is, for reasons of space, here omitted. The topic will be treated in the Party press later—Ed.]

A few words on the question of the drought and our struggle for the Farmers' Emergency Relief Bill. We must say that this problem has not received any attention from the districts, and has not received the serious attention even of the Center. The districts have absolutely neglected it. Every district can do some work among the farmers, every district can reach farmers with the Emergency Relief Bill. We must make this part of the Party's work, not merely of the special apparatus of the Agrarian Commission. In connection with this bill we must point out that many corrections will be made in the form of this bill and will be published in a week or ten days. The amendments that we are making are primarily in the way of eliminating all of those elaborate provisions for farmers' committees to administer the bill, much simplified, and more directly

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guarding against the creeping in of class collaboration tendencies and the setting up of confusion among the farmers.

It is necessary to say a few words about the elections. The election campaign is the bearer of all phases of our struggle, that is, it should be. We are making some progress in that direction but there is still too much of a tendency to keep the election campaign separated from the general activity of the class struggle as a departmentalized, specialized form of activity. There is a special weakness in bringing the election campaign into the mass organizations and especially into the trade unions.

In the elections we must give special attention to such issues as the development of the Sinclair movement. The fight against the Sinclair illusions is an essential feature of our whole struggle against social-fascism. Sinclair's type of social-fascism is going to grow in this country. He is going to have a lot of imitators. I am sure that every good "practical politician" in the Socialist Party is searching his heart today to find out how it is that "we practical politicians are sitting around with a few votes; Sinclair goes out and gets half a million". In California the latest was Packard, member of the previous N.E.C. of the Socialist Party, who now announces himself a convert to the Sinclair program. This will increasingly become a feature of the whole political life of America.

Now, I must say a few words on the *Daily Worker*. First, the circulation. Do you comrades realize the significance of the fact that on the day of the opening of the strike of 600,000 textile workers, the biggest strike the United States has ever seen, the Party extended the circulation of the *Daily Worker* by the "enormous" sum of 7,000 copies? Monday's paper circulated 43,000 and Tuesday's strike special was 50,000. That's our estimate of the value of the *Daily Worker* among half a million striking textile workers. Most of them were not even ordered; we just printed them in the hopes that they would be distributed. And a special textile edition is not just a concession on our part to the needs of the particular industry; a special textile edition is directed to the working class of America. It is just as much of interest to the workers of California and Chicago as it is to the workers of the South and New England.

What can we do to wake up the Party to the question of the *Daily Worker?* We must pose this question as one of the most serious practical matters for the Central Committee and for the Party as a whole. When we will not have the *Daily Worker*, when all our papers will be suppressed, which is quite possible and even probable in the not distant future, when that time comes, when we will have to substitute the *Daily Worker* by the most sacrificing work of printing and spreading small illegal organs at the cost of the sacrifice of lives, then we will wonder what were we doing in the days when

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we have freedom of action and circulation of a splendid six- and eight-page *Daily Worker*. When we had all this we made no serious attempt to give it a mass circulation. How are we going to answer it? Something must be done to make the Party conscious of the *Daily Worker*. I want to ask everyone to say a word on the matter, to say one word of explanation why we don't go forward seriously in the circulation of our paper.

On the question of work in the A. F. of L., of the task that we have to bring forward the class struggle program and delegates to the San Francisco convention: We know that in some places serious work has been done to get delegates to San Francisco. How much, we don't know yet. We should have a report on this question and some idea of the plans that you are carrying out practically. We know all of you have plans on paper. We are no longer interested in this at all. We want to know what plans you have taken off the paper and begun to carry out in practice, and what work we are doing to begin to develop independent leadership of the economic struggles from within the A. F. of L. unions.

We must say one or two words about certain features of the Negro work. Especially we must mention some considerable victories that have been achieved in this period. In the first place, the victory of winning the release of Angelo Herndon on bail, of getting the Scottsboro appeal before the Supreme Court again. We can register certain small advances, as yet very small, in raising Negro questions in the work of the trade unions. It is extremely interesting, for example, to hear from the comrades in San Francisco that the Longshoremen's Union is systematically setting itself to break down the jim-crow regulations, the exclusion of Negroes from the docks, and as a matter of policy taking in Negro workers into the docks and getting work for them, working side by side with the white longshoremen. Every small sign of work of this kind is "pure gold" for our movement. We must popularize it in order to put much more pressure behind the drive in all the unions to begin to win the basic Negro masses into our trade unions, both the T.U.U.L. and the A. F. of L. unions.

A few words about membership, recruiting and fluctuation in the Party. We spoke about it at the last meeting of the Central Committee. This is a very serious question for us. We measure our membership by the dues payments. This has been our accepted standard because it eliminates all factors of subjectivity in the measurement, gives us a thoroughly objective measure.

If we judge by this only reliable objective measurement of our membership, then we have to report that instead of going forward we have slipped backward, since the Convention of our Party, since the last meeting of the Central Committee where we took this

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question up so sharply. In some cases this slip-back takes on serious proportions. We have seen in the past months such fluctuations of membership as reflected in dues payments that it is really alarming.

I think we must say in this respect that we have some—too many—very bad examples. I have already cited a good example, namely the San Francisco district, where the membership for the last four months grew not quite steadily, but decisively upward: 2100 in May, 2500 in June; 2300 in July and 3000 in August. But what about the others? This is not merely a question of the revenue of the Party, but it is a problem linked closely with the political functioning of the Party. If dues are not being paid, it means that the ties of the membership with the Party are being loosened.

Why is this so? We have Philadelphia, which from 1300 in June dropped down to 856 in August—a loss of 40 per cent. We have Pittsburgh, which from 1100 in May dropped to 500 in June, 500 in July, 800 in August (the August returns are only partial). We could go down the list; and while August shows a certain pickup from the terrible drop to below 20,000 in July, and when we get the complete records of August, they may show a rise to 22,000 again—we are still below the figures of January this year, and the average of the first three months of 1934, although we have recruited 17,000 *new* members in this time.

Does this mean that the people are going away from us politically? No, it means no such thing. Large new masses are coming to us politically, but it means that we are falling down on our job of leadership and organization. It means that we are not creating revolutionary organizing forces out of this political influence that we have. It means that we are in danger of losing these forces, that we are failing to secure the guarantees for the continuation of this growth, and that we are opening ourselves to the most serious attacks by our enemies.

What to do about this? At our last meeting, the C.C. proposed and carried through an investigation by a special commission set up for this purpose, on the problems of fluctuation. You have the report of the work of this commission which is full of rich experiences. I don't want to try to discuss at length all the material contained in this report and the various issues it brings out, due to time shortage. This report shows decisively, however, that we have to re-educate our cadres on how to carry on work of the Party. It shows that our old cadres are in many cases choking the growth of the Party. It shows that the Party is being stifled by bad methods of work, especially in the lower units—that all of our circulars and printed matter do not solve this problem. The only way we can bring about a change is by going with specially selected comrades for this purpose down below, to reorientate our cadres towards change

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in the methods of work down below, to incorporate new leading forces, to release the energies that exist there which, because they don't find any way to function, go away from the Party. Also, we must say that the methods of assigning and controlling work in the lower units especially result in a decided handicap in building the Party. We have literally thousands of sympathizers who follow the Party, who are Communists in everything except membership and who do not join the Party because: you ask them why—they say—I am interested in my present mass work, and I know from the experiences of my friends that if I joined the Party I would be taken out of work which I want to do and be assigned to a new job every two months and won't be able to do anything effectively. It is a very serious thing when class conscious, Communist workers find that they can do more effective work amongst the masses by remaining outside of the Party rather than inside of it. Perhaps, in many cases, they are mistaken. No doubt with a well-functioning Party apparatus, these workers could multiply the effectiveness of their work through being brought into the Party fraction. But it remains true that the unsystematic, haphazard, non-continuous work of the Party fractions, and the carelessness in assigning work, and the refusal to take into consideration the wishes of new members in mass work and mass organizations is one of the greatest deterrents in building the Party and one of the greatest causes of fluctuation.

In this connection, we find that in our factory nuclei this fluctuation does not exist. On the other hand, factory nuclei grow very slowly. We find serious progress in most districts since the Convention and since the last meeting of the C.C. in the *extension of the number of factory nuclei;* but we find little growth in the average number of members, which shows that the nuclei do not recruit seriously. The new nuclei remain slow and static, so far as membership is concerned.

I will close with a final word about the problem of cadres. With the rise of the present big mass movement, everywhere there rises the cry for forces. Everywhere you hear the old slogan: we are short of forces; we have no cadres. Again the cry goes up from every district to the National Office: send us more forces. But from where to get these new forces, nobody says. Do we lack forces? I think that we are involved in a serious contradiction if we say that because the working class is rising in great activity, therefore the Communist Party has a greater lack of forces. It is precisely with the rise of the masses to activity that we have released to us tremendous new forces. Why do we cry about a shortage? Because we have not learned to take these forces from the masses and make use of them; because we have too many bureaucratic tendencies reflected in the feeling that nobody can take responsible, leading posi-

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tions in this mass movement unless he has first gone through our various training schools.

I am a friend of our training schools. I think they have contributed much, but they have also contributed some bad things to the movement. Sometimes our training schools, especially in the districts where not enough attention is paid to them, take a group of good, fresh forces out of the masses and, in from three to six weeks, turn out finished bureaucrats, completely divorced from the masses they just came out of. We have plenty of forces, but we must develop initiative in bringing forward these forces fearlessly, giving them organizational responsibility, helping them and giving them a training and education in the course of the development of their work as leading factors in the movement. In addition, we must have serious development of the school work, which is an essential phase of training of cadres, more serious attention to the type of teaching, more serious check-up in getting a concrete answer to the question—are your teachers teaching Bolshevism or a thousand varieties of Menshevism and Trotzkyism, especially on organizational questions? On these organizational questions there is the widest field for the most fantastic deviations with very little check-up by the districts and sections of the Party.

We have plenty of forces if we learn how to use them. The American working class is ready to give us all the forces we need if we work correctly, go out and get them and bring them into action and show the capacity of bringing these forces into our Party; making them ours. This is the answer to the problem of forces and the answer to the problem of building the revolutionary movement and winning victories in every field of our struggle. This is also the answer to the problem of building a mass Communist Party.

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# Lessons of Recent Strike Struggles in the U.S.A.

*(Resolution Adopted by the Meeting of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, September 5-6, 1934)*

## INTRODUCTION

THE strike wave which began early in 1934, the first period of which was examined by the Eighth National Convention, has since that time risen to new heights. The strike movement not only grew in number of strikers, militancy and duration of strikes, but also qualitatively entered a higher stage with the emergence on a nation-wide scale of a general strike movement. This general strike movement came to the verge of realization in Toledo, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, Portland, Seattle. It was realized in San Francisco in a four-day General Strike of solidarity with the Pacific Coast marine workers' struggle of twelve weeks involving the overwhelming mass of all workers in the San Francisco Bay region. At the same time the strike movement further penetrated the deep South and the basic industries. At the present moment a great movement for the nation-wide industrial strike of textile workers has forced their A. F. of L. leaders to submit for the moment to the fighting determination of the rank and file and issue a general strike call, which has brought on strike a half-million workers in the greatest single strike in American history. These struggles, and especially the San Francisco General Strike, mark a new high point in the development of the American working class and are of historic significance. Especially on the Pacific Coast, the fury of the bourgeoisie reveals also the intensity of war preparations, and the capitalists' determination to smash all mass trade unions as the main bases of war preparations. The lessons of these struggles are of first importance for the development of the entire revolutionary movement. The history of these battles must be thoroughly studied and their lessons assimilated by the entire revolutionary movement and the whole working class. Every nucleus, every fraction, and every Committee must begin by discussing this Resolution.

## I. MAIN CHARACTERISTICS OF RECENT STRIKES

This growing strike movement which is the answer of the workers to the sharpened attack of the capitalists is characterized by the following main features: (a) these strikes are in one form or another directed not only against the capitalists in the various industries



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around the questions of wages, hours, conditions of labor, the right of organization, etc., but they also are more and more directed against the new deal policies and the N.R.A. codes and the arbitration features in particular; (b) these strikes, consisting primarily of workers organized in the A. F. of L. unions and especially those who became recently organized, took place through the efforts of the rank and file of the A. F. of L. who either forced the leaders to "sanction" these strikes or struck over the heads of these leaders; (c) the national and local governments resorted to increasing use of violence against the workers on strike; practically in every strike the National Guard was called out; in general, growing fascist and semi-fascist methods of suppressing strikes were used by the government supplemented by fascist organizations and armed thugs, resulting, in most of the strikes, in the killing and wounding of strikers, intimidation of the foreign-born workers, etc.; (d) above all as already indicated these strikes are characterized by a marked increase in mass solidarity already taking the form of the development of general strikes as the answer of the workers to the increasing attacks of the capitalists and the suppression of the struggles of the workers by the capitalist government; (e) a very important feature of all these strikes is the ability of a minority of organized workers on strike to involve the mass of the unorganized workers and the unemployed, who furnish almost no strikebreakers (these come from declassed petty-bourgeois or criminal elements), but on the contrary give active support and assistance. An important factor in the organization and preparations of the strike struggles has been the greater ability of the Party to mobilize the masses in defense of their interests (San Francisco, Milwaukee, etc.).

### THE STRIKE STRUGGLES AND THE ROLE OF THE A. F. OF L. BUREAUCRATS

The experience of the workers in the first wave of strikes also led to growing realization of increasing sections of workers that the A. F. of L. bureaucrats were allied with the employers and the government against them. The workers in increasing cases entered the strike struggles over the heads of the leaders, although in most cases the bureaucrats, sensing the danger that they will become isolated, pretended to lead the strikes of the workers for the purpose of assisting the bosses in defeating the workers. In increasing cases it was only with the aid of Socialist misleaders (Milwaukee), the renegade groups (Lovestoneites among the needle workers; Trotzkyites in Minneapolis), Musteites in Toledo and sham opposition (committee of ten in the steel industry), etc., were the top bureaucrats of the A. F. of L. able to maintain their influence over the workers. The leaders of the S.P., who first supported the A.

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F. of L. bureaucrats' "no strike" policy, as the strikes developed, openly allied themselves in each instance with the A. F. of L. leaders and supported their strike-breaking policies. This policy of the S.P. was again approved at the recent S.P. convention controlled by the Thomas group of "militants". The convention rejected even the proposals for the mildest criticism of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats. Only where the work of the Communists and genuine Left-wing elements in the A. F. of L. unions was seriously undertaken and organized (San Francisco, marine strike, recent painters' strike, etc.), were the A. F. of L. bureaucrats isolated. The majority of the strikers in recent months were workers organized in the A. F. of L. unions, clearly showing that the A. F. of L. workers are more and more accepting the policies of the Party and the revolutionary trade union movement. This development makes more urgent than ever the development of systematized work in the A. F. of L. unions and emphasizes the correctness of the decisions of the Party Convention to carry on struggle against all attempts to underestimate or weaken the work in the A. F. of L. unions (Zack).

### GROWING SOLIDARITY AND MOVEMENT FOR GENERAL STRIKES

Among all the features of the recent strikes which were already noted by the last Party Convention, the growing mass solidarity of the workers has seen the greatest development. This is, of course, clear from the fact that during this period there took place the first general strike since the Seattle General Strike of 1919 and the fact that this was by far the largest and most important general strike ever conducted by the workers of the U.S. This tendency was already expressed in Toledo, where the masses of the city came to the assistance of the striking workers and where the overwhelming majority of the organized workers had voted for a general strike. This same development was seen in the May strike of the Minneapolis truckmen, in the Milwaukee carmen's strike, etc. If these struggles did not, as in Frisco, lead to general strike, this was not because the workers were not ready. It was because the bureaucrats were still able to forestall it. The Frisco general strike was able to be developed to a large extent because of the movement for general strike in the Toledo and Minneapolis strikes.

These movements and actions of mass solidarity, taking the form of mass support, protest actions, demonstrations, and finally in the San Francisco general strike, were the development in the minds of the workers, given consciousness by the correct analysis and slogans by the Party, as to the next step in the answering by the workers of the furious and violent suppressions of the strike struggles by the capitalist government. The whole complex of cir-

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cumstances that formed the background of the recent strike struggles (N.R.A., role of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, terror, etc.), inevitably lead the masses to the realization that only through bringing up their own reserves can they successfully battle for their demands and their rights. The movement for a general strike was also the response of the workers to the bringing of troops, shooting down of workers, prohibition of picketing and the right of assemblage, etc. *The workers began to understand that in these struggles conducted by one group of workers the demands and the interests* of *the whole class are involved.* Thus, out of the beginning of economic struggles around demands common to all workers (wages, hours, the right to organize) and against the increasing violence of the government on the side of the employers grew mighty class battles which though not always recognized by all workers became transformed into a combination of political and economic struggles directed against the whole system of capitalist exploitation and suppression.

## II. SOME LESSONS FROM THE WEST COAST MARINE STRIKE

To understand the development of the strike struggles from the economic struggle to the mass class battles such as the Frisco General Strike, it is necessary to draw the lessons of the organization and leadership of the West Coast marine strike, especially in the San Francisco port. Already in July, 1932, under the leadership and guidance of the Party, there began the formation of the nucleus of the great struggle in the San Francisco port. Out of these first beginnings, which took the form of the publication of a longshore bulletin, there grew in the middle of 1933 a local of the I.L.A. in which the militant elements played a decisive role. Such a development did take place in other industries, but the second step was lacking. Here the workers organized with militant leadership, faced with the refusal of the I.L.A. leadership to take up the fight for their interests, took the initiative and in February, 1934, organized a West Coast Conference of all I.L.A. locals at which a program of struggle was mapped out in which the workers were forewarned against arbitration as a scheme to defeat them. It was this foresight and exposure of the N.R.A. that made possible later the defeat of the workers' enemies. Though the Roosevelt government came to the assistance of the shipowners and was able to postpone the strike in April, because of the militant leadership of the I.L.A. local in Frisco, the workers defeated the Ryan-Lewis attempt to defeat them through arbitration and struck on May 9, and by May 11 tied up every port on the West Coast.

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## ROLE OF THE JOINT STRIKE COMMITTEE AND THE MARINE WORKERS INDUSTRIAL UNION

The M.W.I.U., which because of the situation in the West Coast limited its organization among the unorganized seamen and which had already in the last years demonstrated its capacity successfully to lead the struggle of the employed and unemployed seamen (Munson line, Boston coal boats, Baltimore unemployed struggles, etc.), from the beginning raised among the seamen the question of joint strike action with the longshoremen, thus defeating the old A. F. of L. policy which in 1921 and 1923 led to the defeat respectively of the strikes of the longshoremen and seamen by division in their ranks. This effort of the M.W.I.U. was successful from the beginning and led to the tieing up of every ship on the West Coast and many ships in other ports, including foreign ships. The I.S.U. officials (A. F. of L. seamen's union) only on May 19, when confronted with the mass strike of seamen, sanctioned the strike by the I.S.U. *This unity of the seamen and longshoremen, involving all maritime unions, which took the form of a pact that neither group return to work without the other, and the building of a joint strike committee of seamen, longshoremen, etc., was one of the most important elements that made possible the long battle of the marine workers and finally prevented the shipowners from completely defeating the workers or smashing their organization, even after the A. F. of L. bureaucrats stabbed the general strike in the back.* This action of the M.W.I.U. further demonstrated not only that the M.W.I.U. is a force among the seamen but in general the possibilities and the role that the T.U.U.L. unions can play in the development and leadership of the struggles of the workers through the application of the united front policy. The defeat of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats' policy to divide the strikers who were in A. F. of L. unions from those in other unions and the unorganized, the ability of the strike committee under the leadership of the Left wing to unite all strikers, made possible the solid strike for three months.

Another important feature of the marine struggle was the appeal of the strikers to the teamsters and the response of the teamsters which already on May 14 resulted in a decision by the teamsters not to haul any scab-loaded cargo. A further feature of the correct leadership of the marine strike which made impossible the division of the workers was the taking up in time of the demands of the Negro workers among the longshoremen, who hitherto had been discriminated against both by the shipowners and the A. F. of L. bureaucrats.

All these correct strike tactics could be carried through only because the strike of the marine workers was in the hands of the

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rank and file and their trusted leaders. This was made possible by the Left-wing elements placing the interests of the workers to the foreground, not capitulating before any legalistic illusions. Although the District Board of the I.L.A. claimed the sole leadership of the strike, the workers elected their own rank and file strike committee and this strike committee began to organize the strike (picketing, relief, etc.), so that in practice the workers looked to the rank and file strike committee as the organizer and leader of the strike. The power to make agreements, however, still remained in the hands of the bureaucrats. But after the attempts of Ryan to betray the strike, the strike committee was able to realize the slogan "all power to the rank and file strike committee", with the full support of all the strikers.

It was these correct policies on the basis of which the movement was organized from the beginning, the manner in which the strike was organized and led, that made possible the defeat of all attempts to break the strike. In this way the strikers defeated Ryan, McGrady, the National Longshore Board, etc. That this was not possible in Toledo and Minneapolis, for example, was of course due to the fact that in these strikes the workers themselves had not taken over the leadership of the strike and the strike remained in the hands of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats and their allies (Muste, Trotzkyists, etc.).

## III. THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL STRIKE

When the employers and the government, confronted with the solid front of the workers which they could not disintegrate from the inside because the bosses' agents, the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, were isolated, decided to break the deadlock through force and violence and issued the slogan "Open up the ports at all costs", which meant of course through force and violence, the Communist Party already issued the slogan of "General Strike". When the open violence of the government and the bosses resulted in the killing of a number of strikers and the practical creation of martial law, this slogan was recognized, not only by the striking marine workers, but by the *majority of all workers*, as the slogan which corresponds to their understanding of the next step in the strike.

### ECONOMIC STRUGGLES DEVELOP INTO POLITICAL CLASS BATTLES

In the San Francisco General Strike (as in the other strikes dealt with) we have a classical example of the Communist thesis that, in the present period of capitalist decline, a stubborn struggle for even the smallest immediate demands for the workers inevitably develops into general class battles. Beginning in a typical economic struggle over wages and working conditions of longshoremen,

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there took place, step by step, a concentration of class forces in support of one and the other side which soon aligned practically the entire population into two hostile camps: capitalist class against the working class, and all intermediate elements towards support of one or the other. It became the well-defined class struggle, a test of strength between the two basic class forces. The economic struggle was transformed into a political struggle of the first magnitude. The working class understood that if it allowed the concentration of capitalist forces to defeat the marine workers, this meant a defeat for the entire working class, general wage cuts, speed-up and worsening of conditions, the smashing of all unions; the capitalist class knew that if the marine workers should win their demands this would launch a general forward movement of the entire working class which would defeat the capitalist program for their way out of the crisis, a program based upon restoring profits by reducing the general standard of living of the masses. It was the capitalist class which, in panic before the rising giant of class action of the workers, hysterically cried out that this strike, which they could have settled very quickly at any time by the simple expedient of granting the workers' demands, was actually a revolutionary uprising organized by the Communist Party to overthrow the whole capitalist system. Of course, this strike did not have revolution as its objective, but only the immediate demands of the workers. The unity of the workers, however, raised before the employers the spectre of working class power, of the potentiality of revolution. On the side of the workers their experience was leading them step by step to more serious challenge of the capitalist class, teaching them the necessity of extending the struggle for power, bringing them face to face with the State power as the guardian of capitalist profits and the force driving down the workers' standards; at the same time it was giving them a new understanding of their own power, of their ability to shake the very basis of capitalist rule. In this sense, the strike was truly the greatest revolutionary event in American labor history.

The A. F. of L. bureaucrats were, of course, from the beginning opposed to the General Strike. William Green was already busy organizing against the General Strike (telegram to Seattle, etc.), while the San Francisco labor bureaucrats were carrying on a vicious campaign against all those who advocated the general strike, were busy working against the development of a national marine strike, did everything to weaken the West Coast strike. And if these leaders later "sanctioned" the General Strike, it was with the express purpose not only to escape the isolation, which they already suffered among the marine workers, among the rest of the workers, but also as Ryan stated not merely to break the general strike, but

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also to oust the Left-wing leadership in the San Francisco marine strike as a prelude to breaking the strike of the marine workers. *The efforts to break the general strike did not develop with these leaders in the course of the general strike.* It was planned before the strike, which they could not stop, began.

It was therefore not because the San Francisco labor bureaucrats were less reactionary than those of Toledo that the General Strike was developed. Nor was it due to any fundamental differences in the level of development of the workers. *The main reason was that the united and militant stand of the marine strikers, made possible because of the rank and file leadership, united the whole working class of San Francisco behind them and inspired them with the same spirit of unity and struggle that permeated the striking marine workers. The A. F. of L. bureaucrats were unable openly to defeat this spirit amongst the workers of San Francisco.* This furnishes a great lesson to all Communists and militants in their work within the A. F. of L. unions and among the masses generally.

## IV. HOW THE HISTORIC GENERAL STRIKE WAS BROKEN

The General Strike was not defeated in the first place because the open forces of the employers were stronger than those of the workers. It was defeated because of the fact that the agents of the enemy class stood at the head of the General Strike. All the enemies of the workers immediately cried out that the General Strike could not be victorious. This was said not only by the employers and the government, but also by the A. F. of L. bureaucrats and the leaders of the Socialist Party. They tried to prove this on the basis of experiences in other countries. They wished through the defeat of the San Francisco General Strike to discredit the General Strike as a weapon of the class struggle. *But in this case the whole record of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy and their open statements during and after the strike expose them as the strike-breakers.* Without the aid of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats the employers and the government could not break the strike. It is, of course, true that without the aid of the government terror the A. F. of L. bureaucrats could not carry through their treacherous policies. *But it is also true that without the treachery of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats the government and the employers could not have carried through their fascist terror against the workers.*

The Democratic Roosevelt government must be exposed as one of the organizers of the terror campaign carried through jointly by the Republican Governor Merriam, Mayor Rossi, and the federal government. It was McGrady and the N.L.B. that prepared the ground for the terror. It was the Labor Department headed by Madam Perkins, the Roosevelt liberal, that organized the intimida-

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tion of the foreign-born workers. And it was Roosevelt's N.R.A. head, Johnson, who openly provoked and called for the organization of violence against the strikers and the Communist Party. We must expose those liberal circles who with the aim of maintaining the Roosevelt illusions among the masses try to separate the responsibility of Governor Merriam, Mayor Rossi and the ruling cliques on the West Coast from that of the Roosevelt government.

The main weakness of the General Strike from the beginning was that it was allowed to be headed by those A. F. of L. leaders who from the beginning opposed it. *This was possible because the Party's work in the A. F. of L. unions in San Francisco was still extremely weak, especially among such workers as the teamsters and the printers, electricians, etc.* It was also due partly because there was not a sufficient activity in the A. F. of L. locals to expose the A. F. of L. leadership and to call for the election to the General Strike Committee of those workers who were in favor of the general strike.

Thus we see that the element which gave solidarity, unity and strength to the marine strike and which made possible the development of the General Strike, namely the rank and file leadership, was not achieved in the General Strike and thus inevitably doomed it to defeat unless the workers could quickly take the leadership out of the hands of the bureaucrats in the course of the general strike. The bureaucrats succeeded in breaking the general strike before such a development became possible. The Party at the decisive moment when the bureaucrats stood isolated and the workers were rallying for the general strike, in the first meeting at which the General Strike leadership was elected, did not develop a struggle against the misleaders and saboteurs. It allowed them through this course to place themselves at the head of the General Strike and overcome their isolation by feigning support for the General Strike.

How did the bureaucrats proceed to break the general strike? In the first day they sent back the municipal transportation workers. They refused to call out the decisive public utility workers. They issued permits indiscriminately, thus giving away one of the most powerful weapons of the workers. They refused to organize workers' defense organizations, to maintain discipline and enforce the workers' decisions. The leaders of the printers' unions entered into an agreement the last days before the general strike with the employers and did not call out the printers. Thus, while the workers' press was suppressed by the fascist bands and the armed government forces, the bosses were able every hour to pour out poison against the strikers, creating confusion as to the situation, were able to win the support of vacillating elements and among the middle class strata

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of the population. The Hearst press especially played a vile and vicious role.

It is clear that had the strike leadership been in the hands of the workers it would have been possible by calling out the printers to stop the whole bosses' press, through the workers' press telling the workers the truth, and win allies for the strike among the other strata of the population. Food could have been rationed so that the strikers and their supporters would be assured that they would not go hungry. Transport would be controlled and regularized only for the purpose of strengthening the strike. The workers' defense would have prevented the terror against the workers and their organizations. Only under such conditions could victory be won. This was the program of the Communists, while the A. F. of L. bureaucrats did all possible to disorganize and defeat the General Strike.

The bourgeoisie and its agents carried on a campaign that the general strike could not be victorious because it aimed at insurrection and that a general strike for purely economic demands could not be victorious. The Party correctly stated that the immediate aims of this strike were not to win power, but to win the immediate economic demands of the workers as well as the withdrawal of the troops, the withdrawal of all decrees against the freedom of the strikers to picket, etc. But even among the Communists in the marine strike and in the general strike there was insufficient clarity as to the demands of the general strike, and this helped in the weakening of the general strike by the bureaucrats. The workers felt what they were fighting for in general, but this was not formulated concretely. It should have been made clear to the strikers and to all masses that the general strike was called for the purpose of protesting the shooting of the workers, and had for its demands the withdrawal of all armed forces, and the withdrawal of the prohibition of the rights of the strikers, picketing, meetings, the rights of organization, etc., in order to enable the marine workers to win their demands, at the same time encouraging the workers in the various industries to continue the strike for their own demands.

The ruling class charged that the Communists in this strike were out to make a "revolution". The Communist Party, in the words of Karl Marx, "disdains to conceal its aims" and never hides from the workers and from the capitalists that it is fighting for the overthrow of capitalism. But the Communist Party is not an adventurist Party that thinks that it can make a revolution without winning over for its revolutionary program the masses of the workers. The Communist Party bases itself on the teaching of Marx, Lenin and Stalin as to what conditions there must be in the country for the overthrow of the rule of the capitalists. This, too, the

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Party openly teaches the masses. And certainly such conditions did not exist in San Francisco and the Communist Party did not tell the workers that they "can take power" in the City of San Francisco. The Communists, however, are fully aware of the fact that out of every struggle the workers can gain experience that will teach them the correctness of its revolutionary policies and tactics and win their confidence and support. This our Party also attempted to do in San Francisco.

This great struggle, which was betrayed by the A. F. of L. bureaucrats did not, however, bring the results to the employers which they hoped for. They wished, through the defeat of this strike, to let loose the open shop, not alone on the West Coast, but throughout the country. They wished to smash the unions of the marine workers. They wished to initiate a new wage attack. They wished to isolate the radical leaders in the maritime unions. In this they did not succeed, thanks to the correct policy of organized retreat carried through by the marine workers' strike committee which the Communists advocated in order to defeat the aims of the employers. Thus, even this strike has brought not only great lessons to the workers throughout the country and the San Francisco workers, especially, but also resulted in some material gains for the workers and the solidification of their organization. The employers were compelled to deal with both the unions of the longshoremen and especially the seamen, which they had no intention to do *before* the general strike. The correct tactics of an organized retreat, basing itself on the fighting spirit of the marine workers, was thus able to maintain the unity of the workers, who forced consideration of their demands, taking back of all strikers with practically no discrimination, the maintenance and consolidation of the marine unions under strong influence of the Left-wing forces, the growth of the authority of the militant marine workers' leaders.

The hope of the capitalists that with the breaking of the general strike they could arrest the growing strike movement throughout the country has also not been fulfilled. This is one of the basic reasons why Green and the A. F. of L. Council have anew declared their unholy war on the Communists, because they know that the Communists are organizing the workers to resist the sharpened attack now being undertaken by the capitalists and the Roosevelt government against the workers. The San Francisco general strike is now being followed by new mass strikes of the Mellon plants, aluminum workers, the knit goods workers, the re-strike in Minneapolis, because the workers became aware of the betrayal by the leaders of the strike, among whom are the Trotzkyists, the strike of the N. Y. painters, where, for the first time the Zausner machine is being challenged by the rank and file, beginnings of strikes in the stock-

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yards, the continuation of the strike of the metal miners, smeltermen and mechanics in Butte, Anaconda and Great Falls, etc. The best proof that the San Francisco General Strike is not the end but the beginning of a widespread strike wave as forecast by the Party is already proven by the General Strike of all textile workers, embracing approximately a million workers—the largest strike in an industry in the history of the country. Without doubt it will be followed by gigantic strikes of steel, auto, and other workers.

### THE ANTI-RED CAMPAIGN OF TERROR

The terror campaign and the San Francisco General Strike, which quickly extended throughout the State of California, and since has broadened throughout the entire nation, requires special study because of the far-reaching character it has taken on. Who initiated, organized, and led this campaign? Who was participating in it? It must be registered first of all that the signal for the terror was given by General Hugh Johnson, who, the night before the raids, delivered speeches at Berkeley and Hollywood Bowl, in which he declared that the Communists had gained control of the trade unions and were planning a revolution as the result of the strike; he called upon all patriotic citizens to join together to "exterminate them like rats". General Johnson was declared in the newspapers to be speaking as the personal representative of President Roosevelt. It is clear that the Roosevelt regime placed itself at the head of and accepts full responsibility for all the fascist outrages that followed. General Johnson was ably seconded by the "liberal" Secretary of Labor, Madame Perkins, who simultaneously announced a campaign of deportation of all foreign-born workers handed over to her by the local vigilantes and police. The Republican Party, locally, in the State, and nationally, has organized a serious competition with the Democratic Party as to which should have the most "credit" for the fascist terror. Upton Sinclair, recent Socialist and now progressive Democrat running for Governor of California, seized the opportunity, not to protest against the fascist terror, but to denounce the Communist Party and disclaim the slightest connection with the hunted "reds", blaming them for the terror. The *New Leader*, organ of the Socialist Party Right wing, denounced the Communists as being responsible for the breaking of the strike and provoking the fascist terror. Even the "militant" Socialist leader, Norman Thomas, while mildly disapproving of the terror, gave his blessings to the betrayal of the strike with the declaration that "The General Strike was soon called off by Labor itself". General Johnson's command to the A. F. of L. officials that they should exterminate the Communists like rats found a quick response from William Green of the A. F. of L. Executive Council, who denounced the strike

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and who publicly proclaimed a campaign of expulsions against all militant elements in trade unions. This campaign has already resulted in the expulsion of whole local organizations, notably Local 499 of the Painters Union of New York. The campaign has been taken up by the American Legion, the fraternal societies of the Elks and the Eagles, etc., as well as by all the professional red-baiting societies throughout the country. The capitalist press throughout the country, with Hearst at the head, is carrying on the most vicious incitation to fascist violence against all reds, which means all militant workers' leaders. The growing list of criminal syndicalist cases reflects the terror as applied by the courts, while dozens of reports come in every day, showing a mounting wave of fascist criminal assaults against revolutionary workers. In Oregon the campaign takes such form as the publication of lists of all signers of the Communist election petitions and the inciting of fascist violence against the signers unless they publicly repudiate their signatures. A leader of the American Legion Convention in California climaxed this hysteria by proposing a concentration camp in the wilds of Alaska for all reds, a proposal which was widely publicized throughout the country. The terror used to break the San Francisco General Strike has thus been spread over the whole country and served as an enormous stimulus to the whole tendency toward fascism inaugurated by Roosevelt's New Deal.

### V. SOME WEAKNESSES OF THE COMMUNIST LEADERSHIP ON THE WEST COAST

The outstanding shortcoming in the whole development of the marine strike on the West Coast was the inability to develop the strikes of the marine workers in other ports (Atlantic and Gulf) and to coordinate the strikes that did take place (Gulf) with that of the West Coast. This was to a certain extent due to the underestimation of the marine strike on the West Coast by the Party as a whole and especially the marine districts. Another weakness was the slowness in mobilizing support for the strike among the workers generally throughout the country.

The comrades responsible for the leadership of the Party in San Francisco expressed their main weakness in a slowness and even hesitancy in taking up the exposure of Ryan and Company, in the weakness in answering the red-baiting campaign of the capitalists and the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, in the insufficient bringing forward of the Party and building it among the strikers. These weaknesses reflect a tendency which believes that the development of unity of action on the part of the workers is possible by weakening the fight against the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, who, in every phase and stage of the strike, were actively engaged in strike-breaking. A

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further weakness was the inability to co-ordinate the strike in the various ports on the Pacific Coast, where the two Party districts worked on the whole without adequate contacts.

One of the major weaknesses of the fraction of the M.W.I.U. on the West Coast was the tendency to capitulate before the A. F. of L. bureaucrats with regard to the role of the M. W. I. U., in the mistaken idea that through this they were "preserving" the united front. With regard to the General Strike, which lasted four days, the C.C. already before the outbreak of the General Strike dispatched representatives to the strike scene and through the *Daily Worker* attempted not only to raise and clarify all issues, but also to mobilize the masses in support of the General Strike. Actions in support of the General Strike were organized in many cities. The leadership of the Party on the West Coast, however, showed on a number of questions weaknesses both in the preparation and in the conduct of General Strike. In the first place, there were, as already stated, insufficient attempts made to elect to the General Strike Committee only those who had proved their support to the marine strike and for the General Strike. Secondly, there was insufficient clarity as to the General Strike demands. Thirdly, during the strike there were insufficient efforts made to win to the support of the marine strike and later the General Strike the support of the middle class strata of the population, as was the case, for example, in Toledo. One of the weaknesses of the Party's work was the still weak position amongst the teamsters, printers, utility workers, and the inability throughout the marine strike and prior to the General Strike to overcome this. Finally, the Party, while on the whole proving itself connected with the masses and able to lead under the greatest difficulty, was not able to organize in advance for the publication of its press in those critical days. At the same time it must be stated that the Party leadership, which worked well despite the unprecedented terror, showed that it was able to develop the initiative of the Party units and sections, which showed up splendidly in the trying days.

## VI. THE GENERAL STRIKE AND THE OPEN LETTER

The recent strike struggles in Toledo, Minneapolis, Milwaukee, etc., and especially the struggle on the West Coast, have again fully confirmed the correctness of the decisions of the Party Convention and have especially emphasized that only along the lines laid down in the *Open Letter* can the Party take up and win the leadership of the masses. Not only did these strikes prove the growing radicalization of the workers, the class character of the N.R.A., the growing fascization through the New Deal and the treacherous role of the social fascists, but they especially emphasized the methods by which the Party can work successfully. First, it showed the importance

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of organizing and leading the economic struggles, and, therefore, the necessity for improving the work in the trade unions and factories, and among the unemployed, the more energetic carrying through of the Convention decisions to draw all eligible Party members into the trade unions. Secondly, it emphasized the correctness and fruitfulness of the policy of concentration. Beginning with the task of work in one or two docks in Frisco, the Party, by developing and guiding this work, was able to play an important role in the historic General Strike of San Francisco. It also showed the importance of winning over the new active elements now being developed everywhere among the workers and drawing these forces into the Party. *Thirdly, this strike more than anywhere else showed the tremendous importance of developing work in the unions,* and connecting up this work with the development of independent leadership of the struggles, on the basis of connecting up the opposition with the shop, mill, mine or dock. And finally, it proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the hiding of the face of the Party, the capitulation before the red-baiting campaigns of the enemy, must lead to defeat, while the taking up of the bosses' attack on the Party, answering all questions to the workers, explaining to the toiling masses the whole program of the Party, leads to the very attack of the bosses, their hostile propaganda, being converted into a means of interesting new masses in Communism and winning them to our side.

### VII. TASKS OF THE PARTY IN THE DEVELOPING STRIKE STRUGGLES

Most of the tasks which confront the Party in the developing strike struggles have already been stated clearly and sharply in previous resolutions, especially in the resolutions of the last Party Convention. Here we wish merely to emphasize them by briefly stating them, while some of the tasks have as yet escaped our serious attention. Briefly stated, these main tasks are:

(a) Basing ourselves upon the growing radicalization of the workers and taking full advantage of the spontaneous actions of the masses everywhere more boldly to take up, organize and lead the struggles of the workers for wage increases, shorter hours, against lay-offs and speed-up. This, however, cannot be done by relying upon the spontaneity of the masses, but only through a firm course of organization in the factories and the trade unions along the lines of the Party policy of concentration in the main industries, districts and factories.

(b) Everywhere that the workers are organized in the A. F. of L. unions to develop systematic opposition work; to penetrate those unions in which we are still isolated; to fight against underestimation of the dangerous maneuvers of the A. F. of L. officials

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in leading strikes in order to betray them; to bring all Party members eligible into the unions; to convert the oppositions into fighting oppositions carrying through the leadership of the struggles of the workers connected up with the mines, mills and factories; *finally to overcome and root out all underestimation of work in the reformist unions.*

(c) To strengthen the work and leadership of the T.U.U.L. and other independent unions under our influence, and develop the united front of all workers, organized and unorganized.

(d) To organize the united front of all workers, in the A. F. of L., the T.U.U.L., the independent unions, Socialist workers, etc., on the basis of their immediate demands and through the struggle step by step convince them of the necessity for uncompromising struggle against the bureaucrats of the A. F. of L. as a condition for victory in every struggle.

(e) To develop systematic work in the company unions and win the workers to the trade unions on the basis of exposing the company unions through the putting forward of demands, participation in elections, developing the struggles in the shops, etc. The fight against company unions is one of the best issues for the building of the united front with the A. F. of L. and Socialist workers. It is necessary to fight all tendencies to neglect work in the company unions or to adopt an abstention policy in elections, etc.

(f) To mobilize the unemployed for active participation in the strike movement; to take up the struggle against lay-offs and speed-up, for relief to the unemployed and for the *Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill* that unites the struggle of the employed and unemployed workers, extend the movement for the Workers' Unemployment Insurance Bill in the A. F. of L. unions, the development of the broadest campaign and united front around the Congress for Unemployment Insurance in Washington at the time of the opening of Congress.

(g) To raise special demands of the Negro workers in the shops to fight for full rights in the trade unions, to develop Negro cadres; to take up the demands of the women and young workers; to fight against any discrimination against the foreign-born workers in the factories, in the trade unions, etc.

(h) To utilize every small struggle for the development of mass solidarity, having in mind the possibility of the development of mass strikes, the General Strike, various forms of protestations, solidarity actions; to mobilize supporting actions among the farmers and petty bourgeoisie, linking their demands and struggles with those of workers (fighting against high prices, taxes, rents, evictions, etc.).

(i) To bring all the vital political issues to the workers, into

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every strike, into every trade union. In this connection to bring forward such questions as the fight against war and fascism, the fight for the freedom of Thaelmann, the defense of the U.S.S.R., the work for the Anti-War Congress in Chicago, the election campaign, the fight against high taxes for the masses, etc.

(j) To bring to the workers in the shops and the trade unions the work in the army, in the National Guard, who are used increasingly in strikes and who are composed of workers and farmers; to give systematic attention to work among the veterans, whom the capitalists try to use as fascist detachments, but who, as the struggle in Portland showed, can be won to the side of the workers. This is especially important in connection with the struggle against fascism.

(k) To give special attention to such workers as the teamsters, who have until now been entirely neglected but whose role has been shown in these recent strikes (Minneapolis, San Francisco, etc.); to increase work among the railroad workers.

(l) To develop mass defense against the fascist bands for the protection of the workers and their organizations. This is to be based on mass appeal and built around the factories, trade unions, and other workers' organizations.

(m) To develop the greatest activity in the present election campaign on the basis of organizing and leading struggles around the basic planks of the Party platform, overcoming the weaknesses, exposing the Democratic, Republican Parties, the so-called progressives (La Follette, LaGuardia, Sinclair, the so-called non-political policy of the A. F. of L., the various new groupings to the Right (Liberty League) and "Left" (Utopians, etc.), the Socialist Party; to bring forward in a language understandable to the masses the revolutionary way out of the crisis.

(n) To undertake everywhere in connection with every struggle to build the Party and the Y.C.L.; to raise the level of the Party membership, to develop their initiative and prepare them to function under attack; to prepare the Party apparatus, the press, etc., to be able to work and be connected with the masses under the increasing fascist terror now developing the country over. In order to strengthen the fighting ability of the Party it is necessary to carry on a sharp struggle against all Right opportunist and "Left" sectarian tendencies and to fight for the Bolshevization of the Party on the basis of the experience of the struggles and the teachings of Marx, Engels, Lenin and Stalin.

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# The San Francisco Bay Area General Strike

*By* SAM DARCY

WE ARE discussing the largest single strike in the history of the country. We are discussing also, the first general strike in which it could be said that our Party participated as a Party. For both these reasons it is important to examine certain basic questions concerning general strikes.

What is a general strike? Some commentators on the San Francisco General Strike have written that in San Francisco we did not have a complete general strike, in that there was not a complete cessation of all activity, including food, electric light and power, water supply, etc.

## OBJECT OF GENERAL STRIKES

The character and form of a movement are necessarily determined by its objectives. The object of the San Francisco General Strike, or, for that matter, any conceivable general strike, should be, not to inflict hardships on the poorer sections of the population, but to stop profits. But, because of the circumstances under which our general strike took place, it could not stop profits entirely. We very carefully organized the strike so as not to cause any suffering to the general masses of the people. It stands to reason that in a revolutionary situation the general strike would necessarily have a deeper function. It would have the object of seizing the industries and eliminating all capitalist control.

In a situation such as we had in San Francisco, the fact that the water supply, electric light and such other utilities did not join the general strike was not a hindrance to the general mass character of the strike, although it was a tremendous weakness. Had the strike been under revolutionary leadership and the workers in these industries properly organized, these utilities would have been regulated and subordinated to the interests of the general strike, so as to serve exclusively the needs of the workers and allied sections of the population.

## INCOMPLETENESS OF SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL STRIKE

The San Francisco General Strike was incomplete, due to two main factors. The first factor was the failure of the workers to stop the bourgeois newspapers from publishing. The failure of the printing trades to join the strike was due, on the one hand, to the weakness of the revolutionary groups within these trades, and to-



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gether with that, to the more backward political condition of these workers, due to their psychology as highly skilled workers enjoying a relatively higher standard of living.

The second factor was the failure of the workers in the communication systems, such as telephone and telegraph, to join the strike. This was due to the refusal of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats to call a strike and to our neglect and inability prior to the period of the actual strike, to organize the workers in the communications industries, and to the success of the fakers in outmaneuvering us among those sections of the communications industries where the workers were organized. We were of little account in these industries, having but a few contacts in the telephone, telegraph, and electric light and power companies, and nothing in the radio communications. Had we succeeded in bringing these communication workers out on strike, and keeping the communication system operating only to the extent that it would have helped the strike, the entire struggle would have reached a higher political level, because the question of the ability of the capitalist State to function would have been far more critical for the bourgeoisie than it was.

Many bourgeois writers have consoled themselves with the thought that this strike had only purely economic or trade union organization objectives. *The Nation* even arrived at the remarkable conclusion that there "never was a general strike," and that "the Communist Party walked in at the last moment to be the scapegoat". As one of the evidences, we are told that all the workers struck, not on behalf of themselves, but only "in sympathy" with the marine workers! Practically all bourgeois writers have thus concluded that the San Francisco General Strike could not in any sense be considered a political strike. Let me state here that there would have been no maritime or general strike except for the work of our Party. The statement issued jointly by the Central and the California District Committees clearly stated that neither the Communist Party nor the working class entertained any idea that the strike had the objective of seizing political power, although the State terror against the strikers, the clearly revealed function of the Government apparatus as executive committee of the exploiting class, was bound to arouse the workers involved in bitter conflict to the consciousness of the real nature of the bourgeois-democratic State. The very fact that it was a sympathy strike gives it its political character, because it was, first, a declaration of class consciousness on the part of the San Francisco workers, and, secondly, an act of united class action.

### OBJECTIVES OF SAN FRANCISCO GENERAL STRIKE

The objectives of the General Strike can be said to have been three-fold.

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1. For several years a movement of growing militancy was evident in California, and particularly in San Francisco, which affected every section of the working class. This growing militancy was led by Communist Party members or close sympathizers. The original strike in the marine industry began against an effort of the capitalist class, with the shipowners at their head, for a counter-offensive against this growing working class militancy. Its concrete form was their effort to break the job control which the militant International Longshoremen's Association local was gaining. It was for this reason that the main issue was the hiring-hall control.

The first objective of the General Strike was to defeat this counter-offensive. The fight began in the decisive sector of San Francisco's economy, namely, the marine industry, and upon its outcome largely depended the future ability of militants to lead trade unions in any industry in that area.

2. The second objective, inter-dependent with the first, was to force some economic concessions from the capitalists. The workers in all industries were aware that upon the outcome of the fight with the shipowners depended their ability to gain concessions in their own industries.

These two objectives were conscious, stated, objectives of all the workers, and even of many of the bureaucrats during the period of the strike.

3. There was a third objective, not so clearly stated (except by the Communists), but nevertheless clear to all the workers, and that was to compel the Government to withdraw all the forces it had put into the field on the side of the shipowners and against the workers. These included, in the first place, the Federal Government Longshoremen's Board; in the second place, the municipal police; and in the third, the State National Guard.

All the workers were fully conscious of the objectives of the strike against the military forces. But not all the workers were fully conscious of the objective of the strike against President Roosevelt's agents, the National Longshoremen's Board. However, the maritime workers and large sections of the workers in other industries, including large and decisive local unions, such as the teamsters, which took official action through resolutions, motions, speeches, etc., showed that they understood that the Federal Board was no less a tool of the shipowners to break the strike than the armed forces.

## POLITICAL CHARACTER OF STRIKE

It is apparent from the stated facts that in every way objectively, and for large numbers of workers consciously, the strike had a definite political character. In fact, even before the actual strike

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began, the struggle for the political aspects of the strike had become the dominant issue.

While, as stated before, the strike was not a revolution, we had a distinct and clear glimpse of how the struggle for power develops under the peculiar circumstances that obtain in the United States. These aspects of our discussion are, of course, the most significant. But before we come to them, let us first review the strategy and tactics of the development of the strike itself.

In the article which I wrote for the July issue of *The Communist*, I recounted the main facts, from the beginning of the movement for struggle in the maritime industry, until the second week of June, which marked the beginning of the transition from the Maritime to the General Strike. I shall therefore not repeat at any length the facts already related.

### BEGINNINGS OF GENERAL STRIKE MOVEMENT

It will be remembered that on June 16, Ryan, together with a small clique of local officials from the West Coast, made his now notorious agreement with the shipowners. The workers rejected this agreement unanimously on June 17. On that very day it was obvious that all the capitalist forces were being mobilized in support of this agreement. The press carried pictures and headlines that the strike was over. Several hundred new police were sworn in to help carry it through. Ryan and the shipowners were obviously preparing to force a return to work on Monday, June 18, and for a clean-up of the militants in the union.

Some counter-step had to be taken. The Joint Maritime Strike Committee, therefore, called, two days later, for a great mass meeting of all striking workers and other trade unionists.

About a week previous, in anticipation of the possible need for a general strike, we had succeeded in convincing the Painters Local 1158 to sign a circular letter addressed to all other locals of the A. F. of L., declaring their own support for a general strike, and asking their vote for it, so that, should such a general strike become necessary, it would be possible to call it at the critical moment without any harmful delay.

Only two or three locals had acted on the painters' circular letter by June 17, when the longshoremen rejected the Ryan agreement. When we called our mass meeting, therefore, for June 19, we decided to make that the test as to whether a general strike was realizable or not. That that meeting was critical for the entire situation became clear immediately. Mayor Rossi himself asked to appear before the meeting to speak against any further effort or action by the workers, and for arbitration and the acceptance of the Ryan

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agreement. Ryan himself asked to speak. We could not avoid allowing Rossi to speak, the object of that being to relieve the pressure on the militant leaders of the strike, who were being accused of carrying their militancy beyond the wishes of the masses of the workers, and to demonstrate to everyone that the workers themselves were militantly opposed to Rossi, Ryan, and their policies. We have already reported in the article in the July issue of *The Communist* how Rossi was booed down, how the very mention of Ryan and the A. F. of L. was hissed, and how a tremendous ovation, lasting several minutes, greeted the call for a general strike.

After that, the general strike movement developed rapidly. The very next day the Machinists Local 68, the oldest, and very influential A. F. of L. local in San Francisco, had the largest meeting it had held in 14 years, and voted to join the general strike movement. Hoping to stem the movement, Roosevelt announced on the 20th, that he had put through the Wagner Labor Disputes Bill, which was then ballyhooed by the A. F. of L. fakers in San Francisco in an effort to stop the locals from voting for a general strike.

### THE GENERAL STRIKE CAMPAIGN

Of course, the general strike movement was in no sense a spontaneous movement. It took long and careful preparation. At first the militants sent small committees, chiefly from the longshoremen's local, to other A. F. of L. locals, appealing for support by a vote for a general strike. First we tackled only those locals that we knew were most militant. As we began to tackle the larger locals and those in the key industries which would be critical for the outcome of the general strike, we sent, not small delegations, but delegations ranging from 50 to as much as 400. It was only because of this form of organization of the campaign for the general strike that we were able to create a great initiative of the workers themselves to organize the strike and did not depend only on our older experienced forces, that we finally succeeded in giving the strike movement the broad character which it ultimately developed.

While all this was going on the Communist fraction in the Central Trades Council was making motions to consider the general strike, but because of its numerical weakness, was continually ruled out of order. It thus appeared outwardly, and in the capitalist press, that the General Strike movement was, every Friday night, when the Central Labor Council met, given another setback. But at the very same time, the General Strike movement was actually advancing very rapidly, by the votes which were daily taking place in the local unions stimulated largely by the delegations of militants.

At this point, it might be pertinent to consider why the General Strike movement had not even gained any serious headway in Los

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Angeles, for example, whose harbor at San Pedro was also on strike. There we issued similar agitation for a general strike as we did in San Francisco, but there was lacking a carefully and skilfully planned organizational character to develop the movement for a strike. When the San Francisco movement for a general strike was beginning to reach a head, and our Los Angeles comrades realized that there they had very few locals mobilized for supporting the general strike, they tried to overcome this shortcoming by sending a delegation into the Central Labor Council to demand a general strike. This was obviously only abstract agitation because no base had been prepared for such action. To make matters worse, the delegation consisted of unemployed organizations and the Marine Workers Industrial Union. Obviously, this gave the Central Labor Council fakers the opportunity they wanted to rule the whole question out.

In the agricultural fields we had a similar situation. Because of the popularity of the revolutionary movement amongst the agricultural workers, it was expected that we would be able to get them to join the general strike movement. However, we had done nothing of an organizational character to realize this, so that the leaflets and statements issued by some of the comrades to the newspapers made us appear ridiculous when the time came for producing the threatened action.

In considering these weaknesses of the preparation period of the strike, we must also cite the big gap between the theory and the practice of the fractions in the T.U.U.L. unions. The Marine Workers Industrial Union, for example, has as one of its best features, its industrial character. Yet the workers in the Longshoremens local, an A. F. of L. affiliate and a craft union, were able under the pressure of circumstances, quickly to break down their own routine work inside their own local, and reach out to other locals as far removed from longshore work as bakers and cleaners and dyers, and help organize them for the general strike. But the Marine Workers Industrial Union was so much under the influence of craft ideology, that during the entire period of the preparation of the general strike, it sent not a single delegation to even the independent unions and the few T.U.U.L. organizations, such as the fishermen. For this of course, the fractions are generally responsible.

The period of June 19, when the mass meeting took place, to July 6, was a period of intense mobilization, by both sides, of all forces possible, for what was clearly becoming a general conflict. During this period the Central Labor Council continued to rule the motions for consideration of a general strike out of order. Our strategy, in the interests of the strikers, was to use the Joint Maritime Strike Committee as a base. This committee had 50 members, and as fast as any other A. F. of L. local voted for the general strike

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they were also asked to elect two members to be added to the Joint Maritime Strike Committee, which, in this way, we hoped to transform into a general strike committee. This movement went quite well until July 6.

### BLOODY THURSDAY AND AFTER

In fact, the last few days before July 6, the movement received a tremendous acceleration by the following incidents:

On July 3, the shipowners attempted to open up the port of Portland and failed. On the same day the workers on the State Belt Line in San Francisco, a small railroad which until then had been scabbing, quit their jobs under pressure from the waterfront pickets. The State Government made an effort to operate the State Belt Line, both through trying to terrorize the workers back to work, and through the use of scabs; but they failed.

On July 5 the National Guard took control of the waterfront. It was on that day that the great assault on the workers took place, which has since become known as the Battle of Rincon Hill on Bloody Thursday. The battle continued for all of the next day, July 6, when Sperry and Counderaikis were murdered. On that day finally, the Joint Maritime Strike Committee issued a leaflet openly calling for the General Strike.

On the evening of July 6 it became evident that the Central Labor Council fakers knew they could not simply ignore the General Strike movement, so they decided to take over its leadership and strangle it. They elected a Strategy Committee of Seven, which committee announced as its function, the attempt to get the best conditions possible for the maritime workers, and to look into the question of a general strike. The preponderant part of the San Francisco workers took this to mean that the Central Labor Council was yielding and was taking measures really to organize the General Strike. How strong the illusions concerning this committee were, was evident the very next day, when the General Strike Committee (with the Joint Maritime Strike Committee and the two from every local) was to meet. Our fraction had clear instructions on that day to do everything possible to bring about a rank-and-file strike committee to proceed with the calling of the strike. Instead, our own leading comrades in the leadership of this conference, in deference to the wishes of this Strategy Committee of Seven, decided not to take final action on that day until the Strategy Committee had the chance to do something. Obviously, our comrades would never have acted that way were it not for the fact that they did not understand that the Strategy Committee had been appointed to kill the strike, and not to organize it.

Events developed very rapidly. Under pressure from the rank-

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and-file teamsters, Mike Casey, a faker of the type of Ryan, was forced to call a membership meeting for July 8 to consider the question of the walkout. At the July 8 meeting, he could not succeed in preventing the vote for the strike, but on July 8, after the strike vote was taken, he succeeded in passing a motion that the actual strike should not take place until the following Thursday, July 12, and that no other meeting be held on Wednesday night, prior to the actual walkout, to judge whether, in the meantime, the situation had not changed so that the question of strike should be reconsidered. Getting the teamsters to join the strike was at this time the main force needed to make certain the eventuality of the general strike. This was due to the prestige and strategic post which the teamsters had.

On July 8, the funeral of Sperry and Counderaikis took place, the size and impressiveness of which have since been made well known. This also helped give the workers the necessary confidence to join the general strike movement.

On July 10 the Alameda Central Labor Council, which is on the opposite side of the bay from San Francisco, and is related to San Francisco as St. Paul to Minneapolis, or Brooklyn to Manhattan, under the influence of a strong A. F. of L. opposition group that we had there, called for a strike vote.

### THE ATTEMPTS TO STEM THE TIDE

On the 10th the National Longshoremen's Board went into action in a last desperate attempt to stop the strike movement. However, the speeches of the strike leaders who testified there were carefully prepared and were continually aimed at exposing arbitration, thus providing additional stimulus to the General Strike movement. Harry Bridges, the accepted leader of the longshoremen; Harry Jackson, the head of the Marine Workers Industrial Union; and other militants spoke. The shipowners came with very conciliatory phrases in an effort to stop the general strike movement.

Up to this point they had refused to meet with seamen, claiming that the shipowners had no organization that could effectively negotiate with seamen, and further, that the seamen would have to deal with individual shipowners who had been jointly operating a Fink Hall in San Francisco for a good many years.

However, on the 11th, the testimony of Plant, the most outspokenly reactionary leader of the shipowners, agreed to meet with the seamen for "collective bargaining". One of the demands of the maritime workers was, not only collective bargaining, but an acceptance by the shipowners, of a "united interest" between seamen and longshoremen. This point Plant evaded.

While these hearings and maneuvers were going on, the mili-

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tants intensified their drive to visit locals and convince them to join the general strike. On the night of the 11th the teamsters met. This was, in a sense, a point which was decisive for the general strike. The capitalist class was aware of that. Archbishop Hanna publicly prayed that the teamsters, who were largely Catholics, would vote against the strike. The I.S.U. leader, Furuseth, had pictures of himself in the newspapers, weeping at any continued conflict. A delegation of the Strategy Committee (which had by now become thoroughly discredited, all the workers having taken up the Communist name for it of "Tragedy Committee"), appeared before the teamsters and were howled down. The teamsters demanded to hear Bridges, who was given a tremendous ovation, and they finally voted to go out the next morning.

### THE BALANCE SHEET ON THE EVE OF THE STRIKE

By the next morning, July 12, 60 local unions had voted for the general strike and about 10 locals were already out. We had pulled out these locals in sympathy, and as a measure of insurance, Contra Costa Central Labor Council (which adjoined Alameda) submitted the question to a vote of its locals. The newspapers printed daily stories of how the British General Strike, the Seattle General Strike, and other similar movements were broken. On the evening of July 13, at the Central Labor Council meeting, it was evident that the General Strike movement could no longer be stopped, and so they decided to become its leaders and defeat it.

Here, again, was manifest our weakness in fighting against the A. F. of L. fakers. It was our failure at this point, to prevent the fakers from taking over the leadership of the strike, that cost us the eventual loss of the strike. The fakers dropped the discredited Strategy Committee of Seven, and called upon every local union to select delegates to a General Strike Committee, which was to meet the *very next morning* at 10 o'clock. Obviously, the fakers did this with the objective of preventing any democratic elections in the local unions. Instead, they ordered the officials to select the delegations of five from every local. Thus, on Saturday morning we were faced with a general strike committee of about 800 members, the majority of whom were paid officials, appointed by the other paid officials. Had we succeeded in preventing this maneuver of the Central Labor Council fakers the outcome of the General Strike would have been very much different. But we were paying for our neglect of A. F. of L. work for ten years previous, and we found at the July 13 Central Labor Council meeting, that we could really count on only 60 reliable militant delegates being appointed to the General Strike Committee. The next morning, under the general impetus of the movement, we found many times 60 sup-

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porting us, but even so, the numbers that we had were outweighed by the paid officials, where reactionary fakers were in control.

Saturday and Sunday were used by the militants for two activities, first, to pull the remaining locals out, and, secondly, to mobilize for organizational contact. We had to develop a movement within all the local unions, for special membership meetings to elect the five to the General Strike Committee instead of appointing them. The militants also tried through agitation, such as a leaflet issued by the Longshoremen's local, a statement issued by Harry Bridges, an appeal by the Party and the *Western Worker*, etc., to stimulate the workers to force the election of the delegations of five to the General Strike Committee in their locals. In this we were only partially successful.

By Sunday night, when we took stock of the entire situation, we came to the conclusion that we were not outnumbered amongst the rank and file insofar as sympathetic sentiment went, but that we were hopelessly weak in organizational contact to put the strike into militant hands. We realized, what should become one of the outstanding lessons to the whole Party, that we were not able in the last weeks of strike (for the first six weeks of the strike most of the other A. F. of L. opposition groups did not even meet), to overcome the years of neglect of our work in the American Federation of Labor.

This, plus the political errors that were made, especially in the failure to carry out determinedly the line of the Party to build a militant General Strike Committee led by the maritime workers, lost us the leadership during the period of transition from a maritime strike to the General Strike.

Although the strike was to begin the very next morning, the preparations for the effective conduct of the strike were obviously very poor. Not a single step had been taken to pull the unorganized workers out on strike. The General Strike Committee of 25, which was appointed by the fakers, made no effort to contact and put under general direction the sympathetic strike which began in Alameda County. The General Strike Committee leadership was determined to block every effort to spread the strike. When outside workers or union officials inquired as to what should be done, they were told to wait and see what happened.

In Portland, where a strong spontaneous movement for a general strike showed itself amongst the workers, our comrades were obviously unable to lead it into an actual general strike action. We tried at least to get an appeal from the San Francisco General Strike Committee to the Portland workers, hoping that that would stimulate the militancy among the workers so as to bring them out; but we failed to get such an appeal. From Seattle there was some talk and leaflets about a general strike, but there was very little sign of its declaration.

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And the San Francisco General Strike Committee leadership was a solid blank wall against every effort to issue appeals to those workers to join the General Strike movement. Thus, the best weapon for winning the strike, namely, spreading it, was blocked by the A. F. of L. fakers.

On Sunday afternoon, before the strike, the typographical union had a meeting for a final consideration of their strike action. They had not a single excuse for not going on strike, not even the stock-in-trade excuse of all fakers that they would jeopardize their agreements, because the typographical agreement had just expired. The sentiment for joining the General Strike was running fairly high when Howard, the president of the union, who had been in San Francisco the previous week, produced a trump card at the last minute, by informing the workers that the publishers had agreed to a 10 per cent raise in wages. He threatened the workers with all the other threats which fakers use and finally succeeded by a vote of about three to one (with 400 voting) against joining the strike.

In our balance sheet on Sunday night we realized that this was one of the biggest blows we had received, because it was to prove a powerful weapon in the hands of the capitalist class against us.

## THE HISTORIC STEP FORWARD

On Monday morning the General Strike was effective beyond all expectations. Not only had the overwhelming bulk of organized workers joined the strike, but many thousands of unorganized workers walked out and asked for organization. With the two exceptions already mentioned at the beginning of this report, namely, the printing trades and the communications, the city was very effectively tied up. Nothing moved in or out of the city. For practical utility, there are six ways of entrance to the city. These are: (1) Bay Shore highway; (2) U. S. 101 road; (3) Skyline Boulevard; (4) the ferries; (5) by sea; (6) the railroads. Every one of these ways, excepting the ferries and railroads, was patrolled by our picketing squads of workers. Nothing moved without permission of the strike committee. Within the city, transportation was tied up; production stood at a standstill. Workers, who had been afraid to admit being members of even A. F. of L. unions, were proudly wearing their union buttons all over the city. The whole capitalist class was stunned. They never believed that such a high degree of class-consciousness had been reached by the workers. The San Francisco *News* said in its editorial, "The dignity of labor has taken on a new meaning today". It was obvious that the military forces were helpless against such a strike movement.

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## BETRAYAL FROM WITHIN

Because of the dramatics involved in the great terror which developed against the workers on the West Coast, workers throughout the country are of the opinion that the strike was broken by terror. That is very far from the truth. After the strike was already broken by the A. F. of L. fakers, the terror then became effective as auxiliary strike-breaking machinery. Every act committed by the General Strike Committee leadership was an act to liquidate the strike, to kill it. There was not even a bluff made by the Central Labor Council and General Strike leadership of using their leadership to win the General Strike. Three officials were elected by the paid bureaucrats, who packed the General Strike Committee. They symbolized the entire policy of the fakers. Vandeleur was chairman, and Vandeleur comes from the Municipal Carmen's Union, whose members, despite all the threats that they would lose their contracts, seniority and civil service rights, defied their leaders and joined the strike. But one of the very first acts of the General Strike Committee was to order the Municipal Carmen back to work without any limitation, on the excuse that the general public needs transportation.

The secretary of the General Strike Committee was Kidwell of the Bakery Wagon Drivers, who succeeded in preventing his local from coming out on strike, by the convenient method of never even calling them to vote on the question.

The vice-chairman of the Strike Committee was Deal, who, in a similar manner to Kidwell, prevented his local union, the Ferry Boatmen, from coming out on strike, and provided one of the only two avenues of entrance to the city that the strikers could not control.

Thus, these three leaders of the strike were all officials of unions that were not striking.

We have already said that they occupied their energies with liquidating the strike. Here are some examples: They issued permission to scab truck drivers to bring their trucks into the city with various commodities. They authorized 70 restaurants to open and function. We have already reported how they ordered the Municipal Carmen back. Despite all these things, at the end of the first day, the strike was still solid.

On the morning of the second day there was a test motion put: that was on advising the maritime workers to accept arbitration. This was carried 207 to 180, with most of the members of the General Strike Committee absenting themselves or abstaining from voting. Even this vote was challenged by the militants because it was taken as a standing vote counted by the officials who refused a roll call count. But it is obvious that even in this packed General

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Strike Committee, in the face of the militancy of the rank and file, large numbers of bureaucrats were afraid to align themselves openly with the fakers. With over 400 paid officials, they could claim at most 207 votes.

That same day President Green issued a statement which was widely popularized throughout the city, saying that the strike was "unauthorized", and that the National A. F. of L. opposed it. The only motion that the Communists and militants were able to carry through was a motion to enlarge the Executive Committee of the General Strike Committee from 25 to 75 and instead of having the additional 50 appointed as the previous 25 were, to have one elected from each of 50 of the largest local unions. All the rest of the activities of the A. F. of L. fakers were in line with the acts already mentioned. Vandeleur and company were in continual conference with Mayor Rossi and other representatives of the bosses. The subject of the conferences and decisions arrived at were never made public.

The tide of militancy rose every day that the strike continued, so that when, on Wednesday, the fakers finally felt they had to call off the strike before it got out of hand, they had to put through similarly a fake standing vote where they were clearly in the minority but where after refusing a roll call vote, they claimed a vote of 191 to 174.

### THE POLICY OF THE MILITANTS

What was the line of the militants in the General Strike Committee and in the strike? We have already said that our object in the strike was to make the strike effective against the capitalist class and in every way to aid the masses. We worked out all our proposals in line with this general objective. At the very first meeting of the General Strike Committee the militants brought in proposals for the organization of committees: (a) to fight profiteering; (b) to insure housing and against evictions; (c) to insure food supply at no cost or at wholesale cost through an apparatus established by the strike itself; (d) for picketing and defense of the strike.

At the first meeting of the General Strike Committee either the labor fakers did not grasp the significance of these proposals, or they followed the tactic of letting them be accepted, and then killing them by failing to execute them. No matter what their reason was, they let these motions pass. The chairman of the Strike Committee even made a bluff at appointing some of these committees. However, the very next morning the newspapers carried eight-column streamers denouncing these proposals as an effort "to remove constituted authority and take the city over for the strikers". Under the barrage of propaganda by these newspapers, the labor fakers effectively stifled

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most of these committees and prevented their functioning. Because of the tremendous upsurge from below, however, they were not able to stop the picketing, and because the city administration had practically no forces for effective scabbing, because they had only the military forces and thugs at their disposal—and among the military forces there were even some that were wavering in our favor—they were unable to utilize the paralyzing work of the General Strike Committee in order to break the strike. In the National Guard, 35 members, mostly musicians, refused to go on duty, when ordered. Also in the 250th Artillery Division, several arrests took place of guardsmen who were agitating against the orders. The bosses became almost hysterical when they found that the government with only the military was unable to re-establish the economic life of the city. For example, in Alameda County a meeting of ten mayors tried to organize a system of block committees for food supply. They never got to first base with this effort. In a widely popularized radio address by Governor Merriam that very day, he said: "By its very nature the general strike challenges the authority and ability of the government to maintain itself". Had the General Strike Committee been in the hands of the militants it would undoubtedly have become the center of the city's life.

As the matter stood, the General Strike Committee worked hand in glove with the capitalist class to bring about the defeat of the General Strike, as we have shown in the measures that they took.

### TWIN SCREWS OF THE CAPITALIST SHIP OF STATE—BETRAYAL AND TERROR

On the third day of the strike, namely July 18, the ability of the fakers to call off the General Strike appeared to be in doubt. It was then that the terrific barrage of terror was turned against our Party, in an effort to decapitate the leadership of the strike. Our Party halls, and halls which even remotely had any connection with militant workers, were raided; individual comrades' homes were wrecked and those found there arrested. Comrades were picked off the streets. An attempt was made to create a mass hysteria against the revolutionary movement and to destroy what the capitalist class calls the "center of direction".

In this they failed, first, because, despite all its weaknesses, the Party had achieved that state of improved organization where the police and vigilantes were not able to find the "centers of direction". And they were not able to create a mass basis for their terror, because the betrayal of the fakers was not sufficient to break the deep-rooted militancy of the masses, who refused to be diverted from their struggle against the capitalist class into entering any anti-Red campaign.

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On the contrary, everywhere during this period of terror, the Party found greater cooperation than ever before. For example, although we made no appeal for funds, hundreds of dollars poured in from sympathizers for several days after the raids began. In the distribution and printing of leaflets, and in finding meeting places, workers who had really nothing to do with the Party came to our assistance. It is because the mass basis for the terror was not there, that a large measure of legal functioning has been restored to our Party in San Francisco.

### THE STRUGGLE AGAINST THE TERROR

During this period we found that every one of our comrades, no matter how weak, who was in a shop or trade union, suddenly gained amazingly multiplied strength, influence, and prestige, while the comrades who were only in street units found their effectiveness even lessened as compared to the previous period. Those of our comrades who were in the front line trenches of the maritime and general strikes hardly suffered at all as a result of the terror, because they were, so to speak, "hidden" among the masses and, having the confidence and support of large numbers of workers, were able to work more effectively in carrying out the Party line. But the comrade who was used to working from the base of a local headquarters or street corner meetings, found his functioning very much lessened; and these comrades were the ones who made up 90 per cent of those whom the police succeeded in arresting.

### DANGER OF SPONTANEITY

Up until the time when the leadership of the general strike movement was seized by the fakers the Party held in its grasp the main link to the situation, namely, the forward movement for the general strike. Our errors were not always clear to ourselves because of the intense concentration on the main point. For example, in balancing the score sheets after the strike, we find that throughout the period of the developing general strike movement there was a strong element of spontaneity everywhere. But now that the strike is over, we find that only where we were organized to take advantage of that spontaneity has any certain tangible lasting benefit come to the working class. In other words, although under the general sweep of the movement we were able to bring into line many locals and shops where we had no contact, now that the strike is over, in many cases we do not even know the state of mind of the workers in those shops or locals. The danger of relying on spontaneity is therefore clearly evident, and probably the biggest shortcoming of the struggle was that our Party, due to poor day-to-day work previously, had such

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limited organizational roots amongst the masses, and that we had to rely too much upon the spontaneous response of masses to our agitation.

This lack of organization became particularly a sore spot with the T.U.U.L. and independent unions. The District Committee of the Party was so absorbed with the struggle in the A. F. of L. that it made the serious mistake of neglecting the work of the fractions in the T.U.U.L. It wasn't until the very eve of the General Strike that the T.U.U.L. finally made an effort to hold a conference of T.U.U.L. and independent unions to establish a strike center for those unions which were not included in the General Strike Committee organized under A. F. of L. auspices. We had a wonderful opportunity to establish a great base for the proposed Independent Federation of Labor. There were unions such as the welders, the electric light and power workers, and many lesser trade union organizations, which are not in the A. F. of L. and which we, with a little effort, could have undoubtedly organized into an independent trade union center under the leadership of the present forces in the T.U.U.L. We did hold a first meeting of such a body but before we could get under way the strike was called off.

### SHOULD THE STRIKE HAVE BEEN CALLED?

After the strike was over there was some opinion along the line, that since the Party and militants were aware of their weakness as against the A. F. of L. bureaucrats, and since we knew that the A. F. of L. bureaucrats would betray the strike, we should not have called the General Strike. Even before the General Strike these people argued, as for example the liberal *New Republic*, that the various factors involved proved that "the employers will end the strike on their own terms". They predicted that "if it [the City] succeeds in controlling the supplying of the city's needs . . . the strike fails and labor's prestige suffers disastrously."

In answer to this we must decisively say that only because of the general strike, did the fight of the maritime workers not end in a rout. The drive of the employers to stem the growing militancy was given a considerable setback and, everything considered, although the strike did not achieve its main objective, yet, at the end of the strike the working class as a whole found itself with tremendous gains in every way as compared to the period immediately prior to the beginning of the General Strike.

On July 11, under the tremendous pressure of the threatened General Strike, the employers changed their tune and announced that they were ready to deal with the sailors. After the "defeated" General Strike, the employers were forced to go further and acknowledge that the settlement of the demands of the longshoremen was

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contingent upon the settlement of the strike demands of the sailors and other marine workers.

Anyone acquainted with the whole history of the class struggle in the marine industry in the United States will understand that this was a tremendous victory—if only the workers will know how to follow up the advantage.

The second gain of the General Strike was a considerable raising of the standard of living of the workers all through California, not only in San Francisco where a good many workers won pay raises during the General Strike, but even in the agricultural fields, where the very fear of the spreading general strike caused the farm employers to raise wages from 17½-20-22½ cents to 30-35 cents an hour.

Thirdly, despite the concerted howling of the liberals, the unions, far from being crushed in San Francisco, have 8,000 more members than before the strike. Militancy, far from being killed, is now more widespread than ever, as is clearly shown by the anti-Red baiting resolutions adopted by local unions, by the actions of such locals as Painters Local 19, which for 12 or 14 years has taken no militant action, but which has now denounced the Central Labor Council fakers and proposed the organization of a working class newspaper, rejecting the proposal to accept the *Labor Clarion*, the official organ of the Labor Council, as that newspaper.

The *New Republic*, in its issue of July 25, says:

> "It has been concluded that the general strike should be called for strictly limited periods only—for one day or two or three. The fact that this was not the type of strike in San Francisco indicated either that the leaders are inexperienced in the matter or that they are not acting on accepted theory.
>
> "Unions under contract have exposed themselves to attack by violating their contracts. Fighting spirit and funds have been used up. Public opinion has been alienated."

The best answer to all of this was contained in a leaflet issued by the International Longshoremen's Association before the General Strike, which answered this problem in connection with the teamsters:

> "The teamsters know that their contracts will not be worth the paper they are written on if the Industrial Association is able to force their open shop policy on the working class of this city."

A General Strike limited to one or two days would certainly have completely failed of any objectives. It would only have provided the excuse for a great drive on the militants in the unions without giving the workers the valuable political lessons they learned from the conduct of the reactionary officials of the General Strike Committee.

This political experience is invaluable. We might divide the workers of San Francisco into three groupings: one group of which

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include the maritime workers, the needle trades workers, the cleaners and dyers, painters' locals, and many other groups who by and large understand the treachery of the A. F. of L. leaders and have already taken action which clearly shows their own position for a militant policy.

The second group of workers are still confused although they have seen the treachery of the A. F. of L. leaders. They have no understanding of how it could be remedied, and regard this treachery purely as the misconduct of some individuals.

The third group of workers, and these constitute only a minority, have come to the conclusion, under the agitation of Bill Green and others, that general strikes are doomed to fail for all the various reasons given by the reactionaries.

The first group in these categories already represent a widely expanded basis for the activities of the militants as compared to the period prior to the strike. The second and third groups must now become the objective for an active campaign of education so that the betrayal of the General Strike does not lead to discouragement and cynicism, but to a clear understanding and a more determined will to fight.

The importance of conducting that campaign is all the more clear because now the social-demagogues are making a drive to utilize this sentiment of the workers in their own interests. For example, Upton Sinclair would probably never have won the Democratic nomination were it not for the fact that many workers believe that he represented a protest against the Federal and State governments and their labor lieutenants. Judge Lazarus (the so-called liberal judge who released many strike prisoners) and many other capitalist demagogues are utilizing, in their own interests, the militant sentiment amongst the workers, which is by no means defeated. The Socialist Party made some ineffective effort to utilize the sentiment and has failed.

But the danger lies in the fact that although the Socialist Party, because of its weaknesses, will only be able to use social-demagogy to a very small degree, Sinclair and other such elements will become powerful social-demagogic and social-fascist factors. On the political field, therefore, as well as in the trade unions and elsewhere, the main enemy are these social-demagogues.

### THE FIGHT NOW

From this General Strike, one thing stands out above all others, and that is that the defeat of social-fascism and the A. F. of L. bureaucracy is a prime condition for the victory of the working class, whether that victory be the final victory in the overthrow of capitalism, or only a gain in hours and wages.

After the General Strike, the maritime strike continued under an agreement for arbitration which the workers in the maritime industry

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were forced to accept. In San Francisco and those other ports where the militant leadership was strong, the waterfront is largely in control of the local union. In those places, however, such as San Pedro where the militant leadership is weak, discrimination against the militant workers is being practiced widespread. The reactionaries in the longshoremen's union are continuing their policy of working hand and glove with the shipowners. When longshoremen, for example, refused to load ships manned by scab seamen, Lewis, president of the District Council, issued a letter saying:

> "It behooves every local organization to see that all ships are worked regardless of the nature of the dispute. In the case of non-union seamen being employed on board ships, the seamen also have the machinery set up for the handling of their grievances."

In California itself, the liberals have confidently predicted that labor is crushed and that for a long time no more strikes will take place. An effort is being made by the fakers to split the unity of the West Coast seamen and organize a Northwest Federation of the I.L.A. But against this, the militancy of the workers has remained solid. The workers on the San Francisco waterfront have shown that they are far from crushed. They have succeeded in eliminating all but a very few of the scabs from the front and these scabs are mostly previously walking bosses. In answer to the predictions about "an end to all strikes", we have the strike of 6,000 lettuce and apple workers who struck three weeks after the end of the General Strike. In answer to Lewis' circular and the attempt to split the unity of the West Coast, the militants in the locals are gaining strength every day and the likelihood is that the fall elections of the I.L.A. on the West Coast will show a large number of militants elected to offices in most ports.

In answer to the predictions about the "crushing of labor", the workers have shown everywhere increased trade union organization, greater militancy on the political field, and despite its being a post-strike period, great militancy and the desire to struggle.

The analysis of the General Strike reveals the fact that, far from being a mistake, that strike is a milestone in the revolutionary development of the American working class. As such, its lessons must be grasped by every member of the Communist Party so that we can forge ahead to leadership in the strike struggles which are developing into major attacks (both economic and political) upon the capitalist system. The Strike Resolution of the Central Committee of our Party brings forward sharply the seriousness of the impending struggles and the imperative duty of the Communist Party in these struggles. It points out that the organization and leadership of these struggles can be carried through in the factories and the trade unions only "along the lines of the Party policy of concentration in the

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main industries, districts, and factories"; that we must "finally overcome and root out all underestimation of work in the reformist unions"; that we must "strengthen the work and leadership of the T.U.U.L. and other independent unions under our influence, and develop the united front of all workers, organized and unorganized". The Strike Resolution emphasizes the need to mobilize the workers against the treacherous A. F. of L. bureaucracy and all those trying to prevent such a struggle; the need to bring vital political issues into every strike so that the masses may clearly understand the "growing fascist and semi-fascist methods of suppressing strikes" to which the national and local governments resort, so that the current of anti-fascist struggle may penetrate the strike struggles.

No less must the role and actions of the A. F. of L. bureaucrats (aided by the S.P. leaders and the renegades) be exposed before the masses—their alliance with the New Deal and its arbitration policies. Above all, the San Francisco strike revealed the importance of raising the political level of our Party, which means that the role of the Party in winning the majority of the working class to the banner of Communism must be impressed upon our Party membership. For this strike, in the words of the Strike Resolution, "proved beyond a shadow of doubt that the hiding of the face of the Party, the capitulation before the Red-baiting campaigns of the enemy, must lead to defeat, while the taking up of the bosses' attack on the Party, answering all questions to the workers, explaining to the toiling masses the whole program of the Party, leads to the very attack of the bosses, their hostile propaganda, being converted into a means of interesting new masses in Communism and winning them to our side"—winning them for the struggle for Soviet Power.

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# Problems of Party Growth

*By* J. PETERS

"If we judge by the only reliable objective measurement of our membership, then we have to report that instead of going forward we have slipped backward since the Convention of our Party, since the last meeting of the Central Committee where we took this question up so sharply. In some cases this slip-back takes on serious proportions. We have seen in the past months such fluctuation of membership as reflected in dues payments that really it is alarming.

"Does this mean that the people are going away from us politically? No, it means no such thing. Large new masses are coming to us politically, but it means that *we* are falling down on our job of leadership and organization. It means that we are not creating revolutionary organizing forces out of this political influence that we have. It means that we are in danger of losing these forces, that we are failing to secure the guarantees for the continuation of this growth, and that we are opening ourselves to the most serious attacks by our enemies." (From Comrade Browder's report to the meeting of the Central Committee, Sept. 5-6, 1934.)

* * * * *

ONE OF the most burning problems in our Party was, and remains even today, the great turn-over in membership. Between 1930 and 1934 about 60,000 workers filled out application cards for membership in the Party and paid initiation fees. But only 28 of every 100 of these were retained in the Party. For a long period, up until 1933, we lost as many members as came into our ranks. Dues payments remained below 10,000. In June, 1932, we finally broke through this "insurmountable" figure. The average dues-payments slowly but constantly increased; the turn-over, although quite high, was smaller than heretofore. In October, 1932, we reached the number of 20,000 dues-paying members.

Before the Convention, in 1934, we had an average of about

*THE RECRUITING DRIVE*

*We draw the attention of the comrades to the method of recruiting proposed by the C.C. in its statement and special Letter to every Party member.*

*Personal recruiting is the method proposed. Every Party member must seek the candidates for membership among his co-workers and collaborators in the shop, union, other mass organizations and among his neighbors.*

*Collective leadership of the personal recruiting. The Party units (and fractions) must collectively discuss the proposed list of candidates and assign to every member a number of such candidates.—Ed.*



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24,000 dues-paying members. (It would be wrong, however, to use the average number of dues stamps sold as a final estimate of membership. There are many thousands of members in the Party who do not pay dues. The figures of a number of districts show that the membership recruited is about 25 per cent higher than the average dues-payments. At the same time, the only objective measurement of the fluctuation is on the basis of dues-payments.)

At the Eighth National Convention of our Party, Comrade Browder, dealing with the vital question of fluctuation, sounded the danger signal:

> "Every weakness, and especially such weakness as exhibited in this still high degree of fluctuation, signalizes a danger to the successful building of the revolutionary movement in America. The whole Party must be roused to a consciousness of this problem. All the forces of the Party must be concentrated upon the task of holding and consolidating every new recruit."

Have the Party organizations noted this danger signal? Have we concentrated all of our forces "upon the task of holding and consolidating" our membership? The figures answer these questions. The dues-payments in the four months after the Convention remained at the same level, in spite of the fact that thousands of new members were recruited monthly into the Party.

Two months after the Convention, the Central Committee, at its plenary session, discussed the problem of fluctuation, and decided to examine thoroughly the work of the lower organizations in several districts in order to ascertain the reasons for the high fluctuation and unsatisfactory recruiting. In July of this year, a special committee was sent into three concentration districts—Nos. 5, 7 and 8—to carry out this decision.

In these three districts a decisive change was found in the orientation towards factory and union work—especially in the district committees and the concentration sections. The number of shop nuclei in the districts had increased since the Convention; the higher committees gave more attention to the work of the shop nuclei; the work in the A. F. of L. was more seriously considered and discussed, with the result that the number of Party members in the A. F. of L. unions had increased since the Convention. The number of shop nuclei in the whole Party, since the Convention, has increased by more than 100.

The examination of the units and sections was based on such points as: (1) Mass activity of the unit; (2) Utilization of the *Daily Worker*, literature, leaflets, mass meetings, etc.; (3) Initiative of the unit; (4) Unit leadership; (5) Inner-Party education and discussions; (6) Guidance from higher committees.

In the city of Pittsburgh, the Commission examined a territorial

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unit in the Hill section, which had had 24 members six months earlier and had 18 members now. During this period six members were dropped or expelled and two members moved out of town without transfers. This unit had in its territory two important factories, a meat-packing plant and the National Biscuit Company. There were also seven block committees with 350 members, one I.L.D. branch with 54 members (four Party members in it), and a Y.C.L. unit of ten members.

Despite this mass base and despite the fact that individual Party members were active in the unemployment organizations (block committees), the unit recruited only two members in six months. The reason for this can be readily understood when we learn that during this period, the unit did not issue any leaflets in its own name, and held only one Party mass meeting in its territory. Furthermore, while the comrades assigned to the Unemployment Council were splendid fighters, they did not, as Communists, seek to strengthen the influence of our Party among these workers. The number of *Daily Workers* sold in the territory was negligible. The Party had not been brought forward.

Only four political discussions were held in the unit in six months, which showed why the members of the unit did not fully understand their role as Communists. There had been no discussion on the Resolution of the Eighth Convention of our Party. The unit meetings were burdened with a long, poorly-prepared agenda.

As regards the Hill section itself. After the reorganization of the section several months prior to the investigation, it had approximately 175-185 members. The Commission found that after the section had recruited 75 new members, it had on record 200. There are about 2,000 workers in the section territory in the Unemployment Councils, the League of Struggle for Negro Rights, and the International Labor Defense, as a result of the splendid struggles led by the Hill section. Although many units in the section were very active and showed great initiative in tackling local problems, especially among the unemployed and Negro masses, these struggles did not sufficiently reflect themselves in an increase in Party membership.

One of the weaknesses in the work of the section was the collective work in the section committee. The section organizer himself participated actively in mass work, but the other members of the committee were not sufficiently involved in the leadership of the section. This restricts the personal leadership and guidance given by the section to the units. At the time of the examination, there were no Agitprop, organization secretary, or financial secretary functioning.

The examination of one township unit in the Turtle Creek Section brought forward the following facts and problems: This township has a population of about 5,000, of which about 40 per

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cent were working in the Westinghouse plant. Within six months, the four members constituting the unit recruited another four, all of whom are today paying Party dues regularly. There were many hundreds of Westinghouse workers in the town; but the unit had failed to understand the necessity of helping the shop nucleus in reaching the workers in the factory through mass agitation and propaganda. Hence, the unit, during the six-month period, never issued a leaflet or arranged any mass meeting in the name of the Party. No *Daily Workers* were sold in the town. All activities were carried out in the name of the Unemployment Council. It is clear that with such methods, one of the main tasks of this street unit, to work hand in hand with the shop nucleus to help penetrate the ranks of the Westinghouse workers, could not be carried out.

In Detroit, one of the territorial units examined was around the Hudson auto factory. Six months ago the unit had had 19 members. Six were transferred to the shop unit and eight dropped. How has this unit functioned? In six months, no leaflet had been issued by the unit in its own name, nor was a single meeting held under its auspices. Party meetings were held in the unit territory when called by the section committee. The unit bureau did not meet. For three months there had been no discussion of any kind in the unit. The Eighth Convention Resolution was never discussed. During the six months the unit recruited only two new members. Today the unit has altogether 12 members including six members who were transferred from other units. Five of these are six months behind in dues.

About three or four months prior to the examination of the unit, 30 subscriptions to the *Daily Worker* had been obtained. Since then, however, no new subscriptions were secured. The work of the active members of the unit (about 60 per cent of the membership) was limited to distribution of leaflets issued by the district, the section, and the various mass organizations.

In contrast to this unit, the Commission examined a unit in the Negro belt in Detroit, which had had ten members six months before, but then had 28, of whom 24 paid dues regularly. The unit bureau met; the unit concentrated on a factory and sold 30 copies of the *Daily Worker* daily, and also sold 75 copies of the *Auto Workers' News* and 30 *Liberators* in its territory. It had distributed leaflets in the name of the unit, and held open-air meetings under its auspices. There were regular discussions at the unit meetings.

Obviously, the growth of this unit and the relatively low fluctuation in membership, in contrast to the situation in the other unit mentioned above, were in a large measure due to the better methods of work, the functioning of the unit bureau, the attempts to raise the ideological level of the membership of the unit, and its initiative in bringing the Party forward before the masses.

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A general complaint in the units examined in Detroit was that they do not get sufficient assistance from the higher bodies, and that the unit bureaus do not function.

In Detroit, the Commission found the same situation as exists in Pittsburgh. Individual Party members were very active, were, in fact, overburdened with work, but much of their work properly belonged to the membership of mass organizations, who were not sufficiently activized in our campaigns. Thus, the Party members distributed leaflets for the Unemployment Council, for the League Against War and Fascism, etc., and because of the weak political education in the units, the weaker elements dropped out of the Party.

In examining the reasons for fluctuation in these various units, the Commission found that the members who dropped out usually gave as their reason or excuse: sickness, family trouble, etc. These, however, are not always the real reasons, because, as the Commission found, most of the dropped members remain active in other mass organizations close to the Party. The main problem lay in the character of the work of the unit and its method of leadership.

In the Chicago District, the Commission examined one unit which functions in a territory of partly Negro and partly white population, which six months ago had 20 members, with a majority of office and social workers. There were three Negro women, housewives, in the unit. Within a period of six months, seven members dropped out of the Party, among them the three Negro women.

An analysis showed a very serious situation existing in the unit. Similar situations undoubtedly can be found elsewhere. The three women comrades had been in the Party almost a year, and were in the forefront of every struggle. When they dropped out of the Party, they continued their active work in the I.L.D. The other comrades in the unit explained this by the fact that they had gotten tired, and had no money to pay dues, etc. However, the Commission found entirely different, more fundamental, reasons. Investigation showed that at unit meetings the white comrades (social workers and office workers) occupied all of the time and pushed the Negro comrades to the background. Unconscious white chauvinist tendencies were revealed in the unit. It is clear that in this lay the basic cause for the three Negro women leaving the unit.

This unit recruited two members during the six months—a lawyer and a social worker. There had been no organized discussion at the unit meetings; nor did the unit discuss the Eighth Party Convention resolution. In six months' time, no leaflets were issued by the unit, and only one meeting had been arranged.

Another unit examined had the task of concentrating on a railroad yard. This unit had 14 members six months earlier, and during the six-month period, did not recruit a single new member. The unit

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bureau had not met. In six months, only one political discussion was held; no leaflets were issued; no meetings were held in the name of the unit; and no *Daily Workers* were sold in the unit territory.

None of the points on the agenda had been prepared by the unit bureau, since the bureau had not met. We can gather the confusion existing at the unit meeting.

In contrast to this, the Commission examined a unit concentrating on a machine shop. Six months ago the unit had seven members. In six months' time, the unit recruited seven members and expelled one disruptive element. Not one member dropped out of the Party. During this period, the unit established a shop nucleus in the concentration factory. The unit bureau met regularly and concretely worked out the agenda for the coming meeting. The unit carried on excellent work among the population in this territory, holding street meetings, selling literature, and large numbers of the *Daily Worker* every day. In order to reach the young workers, the unit bureau had organized a soccer team, creating considerable enthusiasm among the youth. Comrades who were assigned to specific work reported regularly to the unit bureau, which, after discussion, brought the main problems before the unit meeting. The membership read *The Communist* and the *Party Organizer*. The unit had a discussion at every meeting. Real enthusiasm was evident among the membership for their work.

From all the facts gathered in the various districts, sections, and units, we can draw general conclusions as to the unsatisfactory growth of the Party and the tremendous fluctuation:

1. The most outstanding shortcoming from which many others flow, is the weak leadership in the lower organizations—the units and sections. The Open Letter, in setting the task for the Party, states that "the center of gravity of Party work must be shifted to the development of the lower organizations, the factory nuclei, local [section] organizations, and street nuclei".

The realization of the tasks, much less their execution, has not penetrated sufficiently the Party organizations. While there is a considerable improvement in orientating the Party towards the factory and union work (for example, 14 new shop nuclei in the Chicago district since the Convention; double the number of Party members in the A. F. of L. unions, and the noticeable payment of attention to the lower organizations in certain sections), systematic daily guidance is missing as yet to the lower organizations. The lower organizations rely too much in many places on written directives from the higher bodies. Some of the districts abolished the Organizational Letter, but replaced it with another form of written instructions. This would not be bad if it were accompanied by personal guidance. But in most of the districts, this personal guidance is given only through

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meetings of the functionaries, where in many cases only the written instructions are repeated and hardly anything else is taken up. This applies equally to the districts and sections. Unless the Party committees take steps immediately to shift the center of gravity of their work to the lower organizations, and patiently help, guide, and develop the forces in the units and sections, the change in the situation will be too slow.

2. The Open Letter emphasizes:

> "Every Party member must now understand that it depends on correct policy and above all, the *execution* of the correct policy whether we will be able to mobilize the masses of workers for struggle and whether our Party, in this historically favorable situation, will become the decisive mass Party of the American proletariat, or whether the bourgeoisie with the help of its social-fascist and fascist agents will succeed in disorganizing the mass movement and keeping it down."

But our units and sections, because of the weak leadership and insufficient guidance from the higher committees, do not yet fully understand the meaning of this paragraph. Otherwise, we would not have a situation where many units have not yet discussed the resolution of the Convention. In many places, we fall back on the old habit of adopting resolutions without carrying them out. And how can we carry out resolutions, if we do not discuss them, if we do not understand them? Because of the lack of discussion on the basic documents of the Party, the lower organizations in many cases have no political life but are merely the apparatus in the hands of the higher committees or mass organizations for leaflet distribution, money collections, etc., etc. At the same time, the lower organizations fail to draw the non-Party masses around the unit and section into activity of the Party.

Here it is necessary to quote again from the Open Letter:

> " . . . the Party must carry on a systematic struggle against the bureaucratic isolation of the apparatus from the Party masses, against the suppression of inner-Party democracy, for the development of political life in the lower organizations, particularly in the factory nuclei, for the development of thorough-going self-criticism, for the development of initiative in the lower organizations and for the improvement of its functioning cadres. Every Party member, and especially every Party functionary, must be a real organizer of mass struggles in his particular sphere of work."

3. The *Daily Worker* is not yet fully utilized by our functionaries in the sections and units, and by some district functionaries. They do not realize the great help and guidance they can get from the *Daily Worker* in the general conduct of their work, and in the political line to be followed by the Party. The Commission hardly

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found one unit where the comrades understood how the *Daily Worker* could assist them in their activities.

4. There is insufficient effort to recruit new members into the Party. There is no systematic, daily hammering at the necessity of recruiting; and we have as yet not overcome the conception that recruiting is to be carried on only during a drive. At the same time, the Party organizations, especially the units, do not react sufficiently to local political issues and do not come out boldly before the masses as the Communist Party, but the individual members work among these masses as representatives of various mass organizations (Unemployment Council, trade unions, I.L.D., L.S.N.R., etc.).

As a result of this method of work, the workers in the territory of a street unit do not know that a Communist Party exists in that territory; they do not know what the Communist Party stands for, and the poison spread by the demagogy of the bourgeois politicians finds a fertile field. Last, but not least, there is yet a certain carelessness in recruiting new members. The new members are recruited in some instances without proper propaganda, personal acquaintance, etc.

5. Unfamiliarity with Party literature and failure to read the *Daily Worker* lead to fluctuation. In those units where the membership reads our literature and the *Daily Worker* the general mass work of the unit is much more effective, and the fluctuation is cut to a minimum.

6. With the exception of Pittsburgh proper, there is insufficient work carried on among certain sections of the Negro masses. This is due largely to the weak leadership in the sections and units, to confusion on the Negro question, and to elements of white chauvinism.

7. There is a decided lack of systematic activity to develop new forces from among the native-born and Negro members of the Party.

8. While in certain sections and units, especially in District 8, there is a definite change in orientation towards work among the youth, this trend is not general.

Some additional and minor reasons for fluctuation are as follows: Comrades are dropped for non-payment of dues in cases where payment is impossible. The Commission found, for example, that several comrades had been dropped for non-payment at a time when they were unemployed and were receiving relief only in the form of food. Too many collections in units are also a cause of fluctuation. Those unable to contribute feel ashamed, at first stay away, and then drop out.

The Open Letter and the Resolution of the Eighth National Convention of our Party deal in great detail with the problems presented here. There is no need to repeat the appropriate sections

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from these two basic documents of our Party. Here we propose a few suggestions based on the experiences gained by the Commission in examining units and sections in three concentration districts:

1. The basic problem is to give more guidance and help to the lower organizations, to introduce systematic educational activities in the units. It is necessary for the Central Committee to supply the lower Party organizations with the most essential material about the Party program, policy, and organization. This material should be prepared in such form that in units where there are no developed comrades to lead the discussion on this material, any one of the members could read the lessons as a report. The *Daily Worker* should print regularly basic articles on the problems dealt with above.

2. Two or three instructors sent by the Central Committee should be on the road continuously, having as their main task, work with the units, and discussing their reports with the District Bureau and the Political Bureau of our Party.

3. Classes should be organized in each unit for from five to six weeks. These classes may be organized as follows: (a) at the regular unit meetings twice a month, or (b) at a special time on a voluntary basis; if necessary, two or three units meet together.

4. We must train our functionaries, especially in the sections and units, how to assign the membership, particularly new members, to work. This should not be done in arbitrary fashion, but, for most effective results, after considering the desires of the individual Party member, and his ability to carry out certain tasks. The unit bureau should always bear in mind that the new members are not full-fledged Communists when they join the Party. It is our task to make Communists out of them, and this takes time. The basic principle should be, not to overburden the individual members with work, but to divide the responsibility as much as possible, and involve in activity the broadest strata of non-Party workers in the shop or unit territory.

5. The investigation of the Commission showed that members drop out of the Party because they do not see the difference between the Communist Party and the mass organizations under our influence. The unit members find they do not sufficiently participate in the formulation of our policies of work within these organizations. The units, for the most part, carry out the instructions of the higher bodies. The shop nuclei, for example, get their instructions as to the policy in the shops from the higher fractions of the unions; the street nuclei get the policy for unemployed work in their territory from the fraction of the Unemployment Council. The task of the higher committees is to encourage the members of the units to exercise their full right to help make decisions on policy. The principle of democratic centralism must be made a reality in the lower organizations.

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6. In order to give more help and guidance to the lower organizations, the District Bureaus should regularly examine the work of one section, based on a report prepared by the section committee. The same procedure should be followed by the section committee with the units. Special attention should be given to concentration sections, shop nuclei, concentration units.

7. Meetings of section organizers on a district scale, and of unit organizers on a section scale, should be utilized, not alone for organizational purposes, but for political discussions, with special regard to problems faced in particular territories. Comrades should be encouraged to give their opinions on all questions, to state the matters on which they are confused, so that they may be clarified on Party policy.

8. The lower organizations, the sections and units, must be encouraged to use the greatest initiative in their work, to conduct their own campaigns in the name of the Party in that particular territory, issuing leaflets, neighborhood papers, organizing mass meetings, etc. In District 8, Chicago, for example, the district leadership directed every unit in a certain campaign to issue its own leaflets, and examined them to see how the unit reacted politically to the issue.

9. The District and Section Committees should immediately work out plans to train functionaries for the units and sections. This can be done through: (a) evening schools; (b) functionaries' meetings; (c) individual attention to certain promising comrades.

The work done by the special Commission of the Central Committee in Districts 5, 7, and 8, should be continued. Special commissions should be established in all districts and sections to examine the work of the lower organizations. Such a first-hand analysis, based on personal investigation, will enable the districts to understand more clearly the political and organizational weaknesses and needs of the units and sections, and help to correct their work.

The results of such investigations by district and section commissions should be prepared as reports and discussed with district and section functionaries' meetings, popularized in the units, and utilized as the basis for articles in our press.

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# Permanent Counter Revolution

## THE ROLE OF THE TROTZKYITES IN THE MINNEAPOLIS STRIKES

*By* M. CHILDS

WHEN the first Minneapolis truck drivers' strike came to a close last May, the Trotzkyites made high declarations about the "pre-eminent and unique" character of that strike. They claimed it was a strike "above the general run" with a "new method" and a "new leadership", etc.

The results of the second strike exploded the Trotzkyite boasts. The actions and deeds of the Trotzkyites during the second truck drivers' strike show them, not as the "leaven of principled Communists" as they hypocritically claim, but as a group of strike-breakers in the service of the bourgeoisie and its labor bureaucracy. Their duplicity and opportunism surpassed that of the most corrupt and degenerate labor bureaucrats. Every action and move of the Trotzkyites during this great strike bore out the statement of Comrade Stalin that "Trotzkyism is the vanguard of the counter-revoluionary bourgeoisie".

The two Minneapolis strikes have in a concentrated and very clear form exposed the Trotzkyite policies on the united front, on the question of social-fascism, on the question of revolution, as well as their reformist conception of strike strategy and tactics. To draw lessons and conclusions, we must note the outcome of the first strike, as well as examine the events and results of the second strike.

At the end of the truck drivers' strike in May, the Communist Party pointed out to the workers of Minneapolis that the settlement was a betrayal, that victory had been snatched out of their hands by the actions of their cowardly leadership. The first strike settlement made no provision for the thousands of workers who had joined the General Drivers Union during the strike and sent back to work without any gains the taxi drivers as well as others who had participated in sympathy strikes.

The Trotzkyites, on the other hand, boasted that the first strike was a great victory. If this was the case, why, then, was there a second strike? One of the issues involved was the question of who is to represent the "inside" workers. But this was neither the chief nor the only cause for the July strike. In the call for the second strike, issued by the General Drivers Local No. 574, we read the following:



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> "The vital questions of wages and hours, which are of life and death concern to our members and their families, have been callously ignored. The right of the union to represent all its members—which was explicitly agreed to in the strike settlement, have been denied. Seniority rules provided for in the agreement have been violated by the majority of the firms."

This statement by the union, itself, smashes the Trotzkyites' claim that the first strike was a victory and proves that the analysis of the Communist Party was absolutely correct.

### TROTZKYITES HANG ONTO THE BLUE EAGLE

Both strikes have disclosed that the Trotzkyite attitude towards the N.R.A. is similar to that of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy. It is no accident that in both strikes, the most vital questions concerning the workers were left to arbitration and to the N.R.A. labor board. After the first strike, J. P. Cannon, writing in the *Militant*, claimed that the "Stalinists" were "slandering" the strike leadership—that the Minneapolis outcome was a "singular victory". He admitted, however, certain "minor" mistakes. He wrote, for example:

> "Against these gains must be put down on the other side the fact that the union agreed to submit the wage demands to arbitration and to accept the results."

We have already seen that these so-called "minor" errors led to the second strike. But let us read what Cannon has to say further on this. In the same article, we read:

> "This is a serious [Now it is no longer 'minor', but 'big' and 'serious'—M.C.] concession which the union officials felt it necessary to make under the circumstances in order to secure the recognition of the union and consolidate it in the next period. It is a big concession, but by no means a fatal one. It is a concession that has been made by many unions."

Mr. Cannon's apologetic tone cannot cover up the essence of the question. It is the same excuse for class collaboration that Mr. Green might give, or any other labor faker, for that matter. It is true that such concessions have been "made by many unions", but the leadership of such unions, unlike the Trotzkyites, never made a pretense of being "Left revolutionists" who "fight compromise to the death", etc. The Trotzkyite viewpoint amounts to the recognition of the false conception that the workers secure their gains not through their own strength and class actions, but through collaboration with the employers and with the governmental agencies. Oh! says Mr. Cannon, we had to do this in order to get "recognition" of the union. Perhaps Mr. Cannon has heard of occasions when the government and employers do "recognize" unions, with an

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understanding, of course, that these unions are in the service of capitalism. There is also another form of recognition which results from the strength of the workers—as to this form, Cannon & Co. pretend ignorance. A few more such actions, Mr. Cannon, and President Roosevelt may consider your candidacy for the labor board and put you in proper strike-breaking company with the Greens, Lewises and the Hillmans.

When Cannon wrote the above-quoted statements, he still talked about the "next period". The "next period" has come, and the union, under Trotzkyite leadership, *has once again surrendered the demands of the workers to the mercy of arbitration and the government.* Perhaps Mr. Cannon will once again tell the workers to wait for the "next period".

The draft thesis of the Trotzkyites states that:

> "It would be a mistake to fall a prey to the fraudulent ideas advanced by the Stalinists' Party that the new deal program is a fascist program. In the U.S. today, the potentialities of fascism exist primarily outside of the political state."

This is an ignorant and stupid defense of the class collaboration policies of the Trotzkyites, and exposes their servile attitude to the New Deal. In the face of the greatest terror unleashed against the working class of the U.S., the Trotzkyites spread illusions among the masses about the graciousness of the New Deal, thus disarming the working class in the face of the growing elements of fascism—yes, generating out of the State apparatus. For the Trotzkyites, compulsory arbitration, government mediators, raids on workers' headquarters exist primarily "outside the political State"—and General Johnson's fascist ravings are "unofficial". We wonder if "Marxists" like Cannon ever heard of a "non-political State"? (Shades of Lassalle and DeLeon.) We will refer these strike-breakers to Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin.

It is *this thesis*, this line, that is put into daily practice by the Dunnes and Skoglunds, the Trotzkyite leaders of Local 574. In the *Organizer* of August 10, the official paper of Local 574, we read:

> "Section 7-a of the National Industrial Recovery Act guarantees the right of independent labor organization."

If there is such an explicit "guarantee" in Section 7-a, why then all the strikes and struggles for the right to organize—not only in Minneapolis, but everywhere in the U.S.?

At a mass meeting in Minneapolis, attended by thousands of workers, Miles Dunne, one of the Trotzkyite leaders of Local 574, made a declaration that "President Roosevelt abolished the anti-

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trust laws for the benefit of labor, in order to permit combination of unions, to give a freer hand to industrial unions". This is a very original idea! Some other A. F. of L. bureaucrat could not gather the courage to make such an ingenious statement. Under the cover of "Left" phrases, the foulest traitorous deeds are carried out.

### BETRAYAL—NOT VICTORY

The second truck drivers' strike did not result in victory for the drivers, as the Trotzkyites claim. The drivers carried on a heroic struggle, lasting five weeks; but in the end were compelled to go back to work with *no increase in wages and without union recognition. The most vital problems were once again left to arbitration and the Labor Board.* Even the union is not secure because one clause in the settlement provides that a vote shall be taken among the drivers of 166 of the largest firms in Minneapolis to decide whether they want to be represented by Local 574 or by other representatives, which means the company union. The right of the workers to determine their own organization is surrendered in section 7 of the agreement which turns over the conduct of the election to the employers and the regional labor board. The result of the election (the workers in more than half the firms rejected Local 574) confirms the statement of the Communist Party, District 9, that:

> "Such elections are used to drive out the workers' trade unions and to introduce company unionism with the direct help of the N.R.A. machinery. *This is not union recognition for which the strikers have been fighting.*"

Section 5 of the settlement specifically states that the inside workers shall return to work "but they shall not be eligible to vote in the election as called for in paragraph 7 hereof". This is a desertion of the inside workers. Recognition is allowed to them in only 22 firms. The young workers and temporary workers were also deserted by the statement in pragraph 8:

> "It is understood that the minimum wages herein specified do not apply to boys temporarily employed on small package delivery trucks, and they shall not be submitted to arbitration."

This hits the young workers employed by the biggest department stores. The question of rehiring is subject to a preferential list. This list is to be compiled by the employers. Already discrimination is taking place through the claim of the bosses that there is "no employment for all," at the present time.

It would be wrong to deny that the Minneapolis truck drivers, as well as the workers generally in that city, put up a militant strug-

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gle or that there were moments when the strike reached a high stage which could have developed into a general strike but for the leadership which set itself up as a wall to head off the militancy of the masses.

But the Minneapolis strike never reached the height of the San Francisco strike. The difference was caused by the fact that in San Francisco there were leaders like Bridges, who struggled militantly against the labor bureaucracy and against the capitalists, while in Minneapolis, the Trotzkyites surrendered completely to the Farmer-Labor Party and the A. F. of L. bureaucracy.

### TROTZKYITES HANG ONTO COAT-TAILS OF OLSON

The Trotzkyites mock at the Communist conception of social-fascism. This position of the Trotzkyites naturally leads to their belief in the theory of the "lesser evil". This outlook is responsible for what took place in Minneapolis. If the theory that social-democracy develops into social-fascism is wrong, then it is justifiable to form a united front with Governor Olson and the Farmer-Labor Party, as well as the labor bureaucrats. This the Trotzkyites did. In both strikes they became an appendage to the politics and actions of the Farmer-Laborites and the bureaucrats of the Minneapolis Central Labor Union.

During the first strike, the Communist Party pointed out in official statements and in a series of articles by Bill Dunne, that if the strikers are to be victorious and win their demands, the role of Governor Olson must be exposed. But the Trotzkyites united with Olson. They resorted to the vilest distortions to cover up their alliance with Olson. They said that the Stalinists claim:

> "The essential object should have been the overthrow of the state government."

J. P. Cannon, writing in the July *New International*, argues that such ideas:

> ". . . have a logical meaning only to one who construed the situation as revolutionary and aimed at insurrection. We, of course, are for the revolution. But not today, in a single city."

It is very difficult to meet every silly argument of people who are artists at the game of distortion. The Communists never put forward the program of revolutionary insurrection during the Minneapolis strike. These nightmares originate in the heads of the Trotzkyites and in the capitalist press. The capitalist press went the Trotzkyites one better; they even predicted the day of the Communist uprising for August 16. It must have been very disappointing to the gutter press, as well as to the Trotzkyites, that the uprising did not take place at 10:00 a.m. on the day "set". But it served its

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purpose. Governor Olson utilized this material, furnished by *agents provocateur*, as evidence before the Federal Court, in order to retain martial law in Minneapolis.

During the first strike, Governor Olson mobilized the National Guard, holding it in readiness in case of necessity. The working class of Minneapolis became suspicious of this action. But the labor fakers and the Trotzkyites assured the workers that they had nothing to fear from the National Guard, that Governor Olson had mobilized the troops "for the protection of the workers". This deception was in part responsible for allowing Olson to break the backbone of the second strike.

Despite the brutality of the Minneapolis police, the workers were on the offensive, and the mass picket lines succeeded in tying up all truck transportation. Only after Governor Olson had sent in the National Guard, did trucks begin to run as of normal, and picketing stopped. Governor Olson inaugurated a military permit system, so that before the strike was over, 15,000 trucks were running under protection of troops. The militia dispersed all picketing. Hundreds of the most militant strikers were thrown into the stockade. Did the Trotzkyite leadership mobilize the labor movement to fight for the most elementary rights of the workers? Absolutely not! When Governor Olson raided the union headquarters and the Central Labor Union offices, the rank and file was aroused and demanded action, there was a cry for spreading the strike, for a general strike. The Trotzkyites were compelled to react to the mood of the masses and give lip service to the general strike. But their lip service, too, did not last very long. The leaders of the Central Labor Union, Cramer, Weir and others, ordered the Trotzkyites to keep quiet about Governor Olson or they would have nothing to do with the strike. The labor fakers demonstrated their dissatisfaction with the Trotzkyites' "forgetfulness" by refusing to appear at a big mass rally at the Parade Grounds. The Trotzkyites were very quick in apologizing and in proving once again their loyalty to Olson and the labor bureaucracy. In return for their promise, the labor fakers agreed to serve on the so-called union advisory committee.

Albert Goldman, a renegade from Communism, expelled by the Chicago District, acted as "labor" attorney for the truck drivers during the strike. He appeared before a mass meeting on August 6 and made the statement that he believed Governor Olson was not aware of the raid on the union headquarters. These words astonished the thousands of listeners who only a few days before had read statements issued by Governor Olson himself, justifying the raid on the union headquarters. The labor bureaucracy also justified the raid by claiming that Olson wanted to demonstrate that "the workers kept no store of arms, but were law abiding citizens".

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Olson's pre-arranged gesture in raiding the Citizens Alliance office allowed the fakers and the Trotzkyites to continue to spread lies about the "impartiality" of the governor. The Trotzkyites even went further than the A. F. of L. leaders. They openly stated that this was a move of Olson to the "Left" and that as long as he continued to move in this direction, they would support him 100 per cent. This statement was made by Goldman before 20,000 workers on August 6—at the time when hundreds of rank-and-file pickets were being held in the stockade, sentenced to hard labor, and when picketing was completely prohibited.

The Trotzkyites and the union leadership of Local 574 did cooperate 100 per cent with Olson. During the last two weeks of the strike there was absolutely no picketing, by order of the union leadership. They instilled into the minds of the workers the belief that Olson would help them win the strike. Every time Olson executed a new maneuver with his military juggling, the Dunnes and Skoglunds created new illusions. It was not enough to urge the workers to depend on Governor Olson (the strikers were beginning to see things in their proper light). They, therefore, resorted to telling the workers that "it is impossible to picket in the face of the weapons of the militia". This is very familiar talk. We meet with it every time we run up against traitors who want to disarm the working class. Social-democracy uses similar arguments in order to prevent the working class from revolutionary action. We might remind the "new militants" that the workers of Toledo fought bravely even against the militia and we may add that the workers of Kohler, Wisconsin, continued their mass picketing in the face of militia. The workers in those places were probably fortunate in not having a "revolutionary leadership" of the Trotzkyite variety.

### TROTZKYITES FOR MARTIAL LAW

In the camp of the capitalist class, there was divergence of opinion about the best methods to use in breaking the strike. There was also the political situation in the State. The Republicans and a section of the employers' group did everything possible to embarrass Olson, to create the impression that he was not fighting hard enough against the strikers. The Citizens' Alliance (the organization of the employers) believed that it was possible to break the strike with the local police forces and appealed to the federal court for an injunction to lift martial law.

Because of this situation the Trotzkyites tried to create the impression that a blow at the Farmer-Labor Party and Olson is a blow at the workers. They linked the fate of the strikers with that of Olson. This conception covers up the fact that the chief class forces were the workers on one side and the bourgeoisie in-

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cluding Olson on the other. To place the problem differently would mean that the employers were more interested in fighting Olson than delivering a blow against the working class. This is a gross distortion of class relationships.

Every worker in Minneapolis knew that martial law was breaking the strike. What should have been the attitude of the strike leaders on this question? They should have fought most militantly for the lifting of martial law, not through the process of injunction, but by mass presure and mass action. The motive of the bosses in trying to secure an injunction should have been explained, but the role of Olson should also have been exposed. The Trotzkyite leadership of Local 574 had a different view. At first they claimed in the *Organizer* of August 10:

> "We are not primarily concerned with this argument between the governor and the bosses. The bosses, of course, prefer the tactics of bloody Mike."

This means that martial law does not "concern" the union, although martial law was breaking the strike. Secondly, the union leadership indicated that they had a preference for bayonets of Olson's troops to that of bloody Mike (chief of police Johannes). More than that, the *Organizer* continues the defense of Olson and martial law in the following words:

> "A few hours after Olson, succumbing to the pressure of the aroused masses in Minneapolis and the whole State, interfered with scab trucking operations by the simple expedient of withdrawing military protection from them, the bosses hired themselves a brigade of high-powered attorneys and applied for an injunction."

This statement contains a downright lie when it claims that Olson "withdrew military protection from the scab trucks". At the time that this statement was written, there were 11,000 trucks in operation—and a few days later, there were 15,000.

It takes the Trotzkyites, however, to put this question on a "higher plane". Albert Goldman once again gave advice to Olson. In the same speech where he defended Olson's raid on the union, he told Olson that he should follow the footsteps of Debs (!!), who, "when an injunction was served upon him defied the injunction". What a mockery of history! Debs went to jail defying an injunction against the workers; Mr. Goldman urges his friend, Governor Olson, to retain martial law even though it breaks the strike!

The court sustained the rule of martial law. What was the reaction of the labor leaders to this? The *Minneapolis Journal* on August 11 stated:

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> "Union leaders throughout the city expressed themselves without reservation as highly pleased with the decision."

Another labor leader, the head of the milk drivers' union, Pat Corcoran, a member of the union advisory committee, said:

> "The decision insures law and order in the city and prevents violence as the negotiators continue their deliberations."

The president of Local 574 is a man by the name of William Brown. He is a recently found "leader" of the Trotzkyites. He is the example of the "new militants", say the Cannons and Schachtmans. Let us listen to this new Trotzkyite recruit:

> "We are naturally pleased to see the governor's hand upheld in his declaration of martial law and I believe that the decision contributes to the development of conditions likely to end this strike."

This statement explodes even the fake paper opposition that the Trotzkyites offered to martial law. The fruit of the Trotzkyite policy, their collaboration with the Farmer-Laborites, is shown in the statement by another labor leader, Clifford Hall, who said:

> "I am glad the strikers will not have to resume picketing."

This is the result of the Trotzkyite argument that the militia is in Minneapolis to help the strikers and that they therefore "do not have to resort to picketing".

### TO COVER UP THE STRIKE-BREAKING ROLE OF THE STATE

To cover up such crude strike-breaking, the Trotzkyites must find some theoretical defense. In such case, it is advisable to spout some phrases about "class relationships" in order to justify their attachment to Governor Olson. "Theoreticians" of the Trotzky camp, therefore, have come to the following conclusion:

> "The Farmer-Labor governor of Minnesota is pressed between two warring camps—between the workers and the capitalists, represented by Local 574 and by the Citizens' Alliance. Whoever exerts the greatest pressure will force this radical petty bourgeois to alter his course."

People must be either blind to believe this or, as in this case, must be willful traitors in order to spread the illusion among the workers that it is possible to utilize the bourgeois State apparatus for the benefit of the working class. Do the Trotzkyites mean to imply that what we have in Minnesota is a "petty bourgeois State" —not a capitalist State? Here they are using the same arguments as the social-democrats who claim that fascism is a petty bourgeois

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movement, not a weapon of monopoly capital. They point to the social base of this movement and confuse it with its content. The Trotzkyites tried to do the same thing in relation to Minneapolis. That the Farmer-Labor Party receives its support from workers and farmers does not alter the fact that in essence the Farmer-Labor Party is a capitalist party; that, in modern society, the petty bourgeoisie does not play an independent role and the State apparatus is not a weapon of the petty bourgeoisie, but of the big capitalists to whom the petty bourgeoisie is attached. It makes little difference to the workers whether a petty bourgeois individual executes the orders of the capitalist class or a member of the big bourgeoisie. The results of the strike-breaking acts of the State are the same. The Trotzkyites, however, to the very last moment, tried to save the face of Governor Olson as an "individual". Hugo Oehler, writing in the August 11 *Militant*, still sheds tears about "the most honest and sincere" man who "desires to help the working class". He would like to save Governor Olson from himself. He pities the poor petty bourgeois radical who, irrespective of his "good intentions", is compelled to do things he does not want to do. The Trotzkyites will not state that some "supernatural" forces urged Governor Olson to commit his strike-breaking actions. Perhaps there is a "Marxian" argument for this? Messrs Cannon and Schachtman, if you lack "philosophical" terminology, ask Max Eastman or Sidney Hook—they will give you a hand.

All of this Trotzkyite strike-breaking activity has for its purpose the dependence of the workers, not upon their own forces and strength, but upon the good will of this or that bourgeois politician. This is class collaboration.

### RED SCARE

How does it happen that the Trotzkyites were able to assume leadership of the truck drivers' union and of the strike? If we were to believe Cannon, everything was "planned and organized". However, a closer examination of the problem reveals that the Trotzkyites were able to *share* the leadership because they surrendered to the labor bureaucrats of the A. F. of L. and by organizing the workers, not on the basis of struggle for their demands and against capitalism, but by appealing to the most backward ideology of the workers. The Trotzkyites did not hesitate to praise the New Deal, to wave the flag and to open each meeting with the singing of the Star Spangled Banner. In the *Militant* of August 25, we read:

> "In Frisco, the cry of Communist tore a deep hole in the strike front. In Minneapolis, it was a complete dud. The leaders faced the issue squarely. They did not rush into print denying their accusations. Nor did they shout their opinions to the wide world."

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Yes, they "did not shout their opinions to the wide world". They did everything possible to organize an anti-Red hysteria. Groups of misled workers and henchmen of Dunne and Skoglund were organized to beat Communists, to tear Communist leaflets out of the hands of workers.

*But they did everything possible to hide their identity.* The greatest calamity that could have happened to them would have been for some one outside of the employers to accuse them of being Communists. In their paper, the *Organizer*, they tried to laugh the Communist issue away.

Here is a sample of the way the Trotzkyites dealt with the Red issue. In a leaflet issued by Locals 574 and 120 to the petroleum workers, we find the following statement:

> "Don't allow the Red Scare to keep you from coming to this meeting. If we were 'Reds' and 'Communists', why haven't we pulled the petroleum industry out on strike where a large part of our organization is? For the reason that the oil companies have seen fit to negotiate wages and conditions for you."

We must agree with the Trotzkyites that they are not Communists, for if Communists were at the head of Local 574, they would not send their own members to scab while a part of their membership was out on strike. J. W. Lawson, secretary of the Minnesota State Federation of Labor, delivered a speech over the radio, in which he told the employers that if they would point out any Communists in the A. F. of L. or in Local 574, these would be immediately expelled from the union. Did the Trotzkyites raise any objection to this statement? On the contrary, they printed a praising summary of Lawson's speech in the *Organizer* and conveniently omitted this portion.

At the Minnesota State Federation of Labor Convention, held at International Falls on August 22, the Communist Party distributed a leaflet exposing the strike-breaking role of Olson. This leaflet aroused the fury of the labor bureaucracy. Mr. Lawson again issued a statement which was printed in the Minneapolis press. He foamed at the mouth and cried:

> "I want to put this organization on record as having no responsibility whatever for distribution of incendiary literature and I want to call on the leaders of the legitimate labor movement to drive this element out of the halls in which they hold their meetings."

No fascist could make a better statement than this lackey of Governor Olson who is disguised as a labor leader. Local 574 sent a delegation to this convention. What did they have to say about this proposal of Lawson? William Brown, president of Local 574,

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got up and seconded the motion of Lawson and then tried to pass the thing over by reducing it to an absurdity. He said:

> "If they [the Communists] knew that their names were even so much as mentioned here, they would hold a rally of their whole 70 members in Minneapolis and hail a victory. Let us ignore them."

This is "facing the issue squarely", says the *Militant*.

Servile lackeys are never secure in their position. The more they cringe before their masters, the greater the danger of losing favor with their masters. The Trotzkyites played their role in the strike. They helped to protect Governor Olson. It seems, however, that the labor bureaucracy feels that they no longer need the Trotzkyites. They have therefore begun a campaign to give the Trotzkyites the boot.

William Green sent in a representative of the Executive Council of the A. F. of L., Paul Smith, to begin this "purging" process. The first thing Mr. Smith did was to separate the gasoline station employees from Local 574 and organize them into a separate local with a charter direct from the Executive Council. The Trotzkyites have been shouting about the fact that they have built an industrial union in Minneapolis, that they take no orders from Green or Olson. But no one ever saw a more whipped bunch of traitors than the Trotzkyites when this act was committed. They allowed this to pass by without a word of protest.

At the Minnesota State Federation of Labor Convention, Wm. Shoenberg, one of the leaders, dropped a significant phrase. He said that the settlement of the general drivers' strike would be followed "by an aftermath within the organization". In other words, the ground is being prepared to oust the Dunnes and the Skoglunds, whose services are no longer required. Let Mr. Cannon shout himself hoarse about the "liberal construction" of the A. F. of L. unions and its "compensated advantages", etc. The Trotzkyites by their anti-Communist activity sowed the wind and they are reaping a whirlwind. We might add here that the militant workers, too, have accounts to settle with them, but for different reasons than those of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy.

### STRIKE STRATEGY AND TACTICS

The Trotzkyites wish to make the labor movement believe that the tactics and strategy pursued by them in the Minneapolis strikes deserve to be duplicated elsewhere. Cannon, in the July number of the *New International*, says:

> "Policy, method, leadership—these were the determining factors at Minneapolis which the aspiring workers everywhere ought to study and follow."

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Those that aspire to defeat the working class surely will utilize the Trotzkyites' method as an example, but the revolutionary workers will reject their example. The Minneapolis strike did not reach the high phase that was reached by the Toledo, San Francisco, or Milwaukee strikes. In San Francisco, because of the militant Left wing, it was possible for a long period of time to fight off the reactionary A. F. of L. bureaucracy and the employers, and to realize the general strike. The strike was broken because of the direct treachery of the A. F. of L. bureaucracy. In Toledo, the A. F. of L. leaders had to maneuver for many days before they could betray the sentiment for general strike which was endorsed by nearly 90 locals. In Milwaukee, too, the Federated Trades Council was compelled to vote for a 48-hour general strike just before the carmen's strike was called off. In Minneapolis, however, the Trotzkyites, in alliance with the labor bureaucracy and Governor Olson, never allowed the sentiment for a general strike to develop to a point where it could be realized. First of all, they prevented their own members from joining the truck drivers' strike; secondly, even two weeks before the strike settlement, they sent the taxi drivers back to work without any gains. Only a weak attempt was made to pull the St. Paul drivers out on strike. The A. F. of L. bureaucrats, through parliamentary trickery, prevented the strike. The Trotzkyites, in this case too, gave up for fear of displeasing the fakers or going over their heads.

The Communist Party, District 9, saw that the strike was in danger of being broken, that the only thing that would save the strike would be a renewal of mass picketing and a spreading of the strike. The Party put forward the following proposals to the union membership:

> "All members of 574 shall be called off the jobs they have been sent to, and *picketing on a mass scale must be renewed.*
>
> "Committees of from 20 to 50 drivers must be organized to visit all local unions, shops, factories, car barns, unemployed organizations and all workers' organizations to ask those workers to lay down tools and join us in the fight, which is the fight of the whole labor movement against the Citizens' Alliance.
>
> "In order to unite the whole labor movement behind the drivers, let us call immediately a *united labor conference*, with representatives from all labor unions, shops, factories and all other working class organizations, unemployed and employed. This Conference shall decide the question of a *general strike*, with the object to fight for the rights of the workers to join unions of their own choice, for the right to picket, for freedom of speech and assemblage, the release of our brothers in the stockade and for the lifting of all military regulations, which threaten to break the strike. *We can learn from the experience of San Francisco*, that under the leadership of militant workers, such as Bridges, this can be done. The success

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> of such a movement is unquestionable if the Committee of 100 acts decisively, breaks all connections with the agents of Olson."

This statement correctly pointed out that under the leadership of Communists, and not fakers like the Dunne brothers, these steps would have been taken a long time ago, and the strike would have been won.

These proposals met with great response from the union membership—so much so, that the Trotzkyite leadership was compelled to begin once again to give lip service to the general strike. They adopted a very weak resolution, appealing to the labor movement for a 24-hour general strike and also issued a very weak statement to the Minnesota State Federation of Labor, knowing well enough that the labor bureaucracy, the friends of Olson, would not endorse such a move. Even during the last week of the strike, it was still possible to organize a movement for general strike, but this could have been accomplished only over the heads of the leaders of the Central Labor Union, which, of course, the Trotzkyites also would not dare to do. This is how they stated the problem:

> "In view of the concerted attack on Local 574 by all the forces of capital, is labor ready to bring its own reserves into action? That is the question. The answer rests, *first, with the leaders* of organized labor in Minneapolis, and second, with the rank and file of the individual unions with whom the power of decision rests." (*Organizer*, August 18, 1934.)

Here again the Trotzkyites showed their true colors. If the answer rests "first with the leaders", there never could be a general strike; the Trotzkyites knew this as well as anyone else. However, they purposely stated the question in this manner because they, too, were not interested in realizing a general strike as was proposed by the Communist Party.

There were many local unions that were interested in initiating such action. They were only waiting for a call from Local 574. In fact, rank-and-file A. F. of L. groups in some locals did propose such a motion. Naturally, this was very difficult because the membership of the locals would say, you ask us to join in a sympathetic and general strike, but the local most seriously involved refuses to initiate such action. More than that, we are asked to join in a sympathetic strike while their own membership is kept at work—scabbing upon their own brothers. This argument was hard to meet; only the most conscious of workers could answer satisfactorily why such action must be taken in spite of the leadership of 574. But the responsibility for such reaction was upon the shoulders of the Trotzkyite leadership.

We notice that the Trotzkyites spout phrases about "reserves".

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The Cannons and the Schachtmans, as well as the Dunne brothers, in this case, show complete ignorance of the most elementary principles of strike strategy and tactics. At the time they shouted about the necessity to call out "reserves", the strike was already in its fifth week, with the backbone broken. We may ask: was it not somewhat late to begin calling for reserves at such a time? Why did you refuse and stand in the way of calling out the reserves when it was possible to do so, when it was possible to realize even the general strike and bring victory, not only to the drivers of Local 574, but to the labor movement of Minneapolis? Because you Trotzkyites were not interested in mobilizing such action.

The Trotzkyites want to make the workers believe that they are the incarnation of "modern" strike strategy and tactics. We believe that any honest worker who has been a member of a trade union for a period of time could teach these "new militants" a thing or two about strike strategy and tactics. Every worker knows that when you bargain with a boss, you must be careful not to surrender your demands in the first discussion, that you have to stick by the demands, that a concession is given only in the last resort, when there is no other way out. What did the Trotzkyite leadership of Local 574 do? In the very beginning of the strike, they surrendered all the original demands, including the point on wages, and endorsed the Haas-Dunnigan proposals. The employers, naturally, took advantage of this situation. The Trotzkyites hung on the coat-tails of Haas, even when this priest, acting as a government mediator, had already himself repudiated his own proposals. The mediators, too, knew that the union leadership was weak-kneed. They therefore threw overboard the original Haas-Dunnigan proposals and proposed a new set of proposals which won the endorsement of the employers. These proposals, of course, were a little too crude; they demanded that the strike cease, that all be taken back to work, *except* strikers who had participated in "violence" during the strike. This meant black-listing the most active workers. Had the Trotzkyites accepted this proposal, they would have been doomed and crushed by the rank and file. They, therefore, began to maneuver to modify this proposal, and the agreement which they finally accepted was only a modification of the original plan proposed by the Citizens' Alliance.

Cannon, in dealing with the problem of strike settlement, says:

> "There is little to go by in the way of previous experience to aid the modern militants in determining how and when to settle strikes. Their predecessors did not settle any."

The world began with the birth of Mr. Cannon; and there were no strikes "settled" until the Trotzkyites appeared upon the scene.

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We shall not waste any time to convince these traitors that there were strikes before they became famous as strike-breakers, and that there were settlements before they "settled" Minneapolis.

### SHORTCOMINGS AND TASKS OF THE C.P.

In dealing with the role of the Communist Party during the strikes, we cannot help but state that the Party was trailing behind events. The Party did not prepare for the second strike. One gets the impression that the Party depended too much upon spontaneity, waiting for things to happen. Comrade Stalin points out that the theory of spontaneity is opportunism, that it is a denial of the role of the Party as the leader of the working class, that it means taking the line of least resistance.

During the first strike, the Party was able to link itself up with the strikers, to participate actively in picketing and even to lead in the battle of the Market, which has since become famous. However, even in the first strike, the Party worked chiefly from the outside. There was no organized Party fraction or rank-and-file opposition group within General Drivers Local 574. In the period between the first and second strikes, the chief tasks of the Party should have been the building up of a strong Communist fraction and rank-and-file group. But this was not done. Thus, the Party during the second strike again found itself as an outside force.

The slogans and demands put forward by the Party were generally correct and helped to mobilize the masses in support of the truck drivers; but the Party could have been much more effective if it had carried on work inside the local union. This gave the Trotzkyite leadership the opportunity to raise the cry of "outsiders". The Party was the only organization that came forward openly and clearly in exposing the role of Olson and the relation of the Trotzkyites to the Farmer-Labor Party. Yet we must state that there was a tendency to hesitate in exposing the Trotzkyite local leadership more sharply. The Minneapolis membership is a new membership. Its ideological background is still low; it can be said that this accounted for a certain slump in activity during the latter part of the strike. It was brought out in many units that many Party members did not understand the political differences between the Communists and the counter-revolutionary Trotzkyites. Because of this, there was a tolerant attitude on the part of even some Party members inside Local 574 towards the Trotzkyites. These comrades, instead of putting forward a clear Communist position, allowed themselves to be swept along by mass sentiment.

A serious strike situation demands more from the Party than during so-called normal times. However, the Party was not prepared for such a situation. Precisely when the functionaries and

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the lower Party organizations should have utilized the utmost initiative, they failed to respond. True, it was difficult to work in the face of martial law and in the face of the anti-Communist drive carried on by the Trotzkyites, but Communists must find ways and means of carrying through their tasks. There was even hesitation when it came to the distribution of leaflets, so that the District was compelled to utilize extraordinary measures in this respect. Technical matters were also badly neglected. The responsibility for such a situation rests squarely upon the shoulders of the leadership of District 9. There was too much of a tendency to surrender in the face of martial law. It was only towards the end of the strike that attempts were made to hold demonstrations with Communist slogans, despite the National Guard.

Another weakness disclosed in the strike was the failure to mobilize and involve the unemployed. It is true that the unemployed at the beginning of the second strike did come to offer their assistance and solidarity and were turned down by the Trotzkyite leadership. But the unemployed should have been involved despite the Trotzkyites. This was done in the first strike, and could have been repeated during the second strike.

Here, however, we must note that even in the first strike the participation of the unemployed was not utilized to infuse the strikers with the slogans of the Party. We may even place the question whether the unemployed, although mobilized by the Party, did not become a mere adjunct under A. F. of L. and Trotzkyite leadership, by giving up its identity on the picket line.

### CONCLUSIONS TO BE DRAWN FROM THE STRIKE

District 9, as well as the Party generally, must draw some conclusions from this last strike. The first and immediate task is the building of a Communist fraction among the truck drivers; then, by all means, a rank-and-file opposition group must be organized in Local 574. There is sentiment for such a movement after this latest betrayal. The workers are beginning to learn through their own experiences of the traitorous deeds of the Dunne brothers. Secondly, the Party apparatus must be educated and organized to act more decisively during extraordinary situations, both technically and ideologically.

Discussions should be organized in the units and classes set up to educate the membership in elementary principles of Marxism-Leninism. We must make our position on the Farmer-Labor Party clear. Governor Olson and the Farmer-Labor Party have lately increased their demagogy about establishing the "cooperative commonwealth". It is necessary that we expose this fraud. This can be done by placing in opposition to the fake "corporate common-

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wealth" our slogan of a real revolutionary workers' and farmers' government—the dictatorship of the proletariat. In the literature issued by our comrades during the strike, this was neglected. Even the statement issued by the District Committee analyzing the strike betrayal, while being generally correct, fails to bring out these political conclusions. This problem is important in every district; but in Minnesota, where the Farmer-Labor Party is in power, this is especially important.

The Minneapolis strike should further make us realize that when the Party as a conscious force is missing, even the best intentions and policies remain scraps of paper. Finally, District 9 must build its base in the Twin Cities, and must not lean too much on the agrarian outside sections. It is this failure to crystallize a base in the Twin Cities that is responsible for the failure of the Party membership to respond more decisively during the strike. This will be clear to us when we understand what Lenin taught us about the hegemony of the proletariat. If the Party would derive its strength from the proletariat in the Twin Cities, the District as a whole will be stronger and will be able to give leadership to the toiling farmers as well.

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# Leninism Is the Only Marxism of the Imperialist Era

*By* ALEX BITTELMAN *and* V. J. JEROME

(*A Review of Lewis Corey's The Decline of American Capitalism.**)

IT is truly a sign of the times when a bourgeois publishing house, in the belief that it is engaging in a sound business venture, publishes an imposing work in which (according to the jacket announcement) "for the first time, the Marxian conception of capitalist economy has been applied to the development of American capitalism". The appearance of *The Decline of American Capitalism* by Lewis Corey offers striking testimony to the fact that Marxism in the United States is becoming popular, not only among the more advanced workers, but also in large sections of intellectuals. It reflects the fact that increasing sections among the intellectuals are passing through a period of "revaluation of values", that they are discarding the bankrupt notions of bourgeois social sciences and reaching out to Marxism for a solution of the basic problems of our epoch. This, too, is a symptom of the decline of American capitalism.

To all appearances, the author of *The Decline of American Capitalism* has made a serious effort to give a Marxian analysis of American capitalism. It is, of course, not the *first* Marxian analysis of American capitalism, the assertion on the jacket notwithstanding. The author draws freely, and properly so, upon Marx, Lenin, Stalin, and on Communist literature generally—not only in the general theoretical part of his book, but also in his analysis of the causes of the decline of *American* capitalism. Priority as a Marxian analysis of American capitalism is, therefore, not a specific contribution of the book; and Mr. Corey himself, we assume, will readily agree that this is so.

For a correct understanding of the book it is necessary to remember that the first analysis of American capitalism of the post-War period was made by the Communist International while Lenin was still alive. It is in the decisions and theses of the Comintern and in the writings of its leaders that we find full and adequate proof of the Marxist-Leninist proposition that the fundamental laws of capitalist development apply with full force also to American capitalism, and that it cannot be otherwise. Bourgeois economists in the United States ridiculed this proposition, setting up, instead, the specious theory of American exceptionalism. Social-fascism made

* Covici Friede, New York, 622 pages, $4.



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this theory its own. In the years of "prosperity" we had Lovestone, the former leader of the Communist Party, defending this bourgeois theory of American exceptionalism as against the Communist International which, during the very height of the "endless prosperity", pointed out to the American Communists the inexorable workings of the general laws of capitalism in the United States and the imminence of a deep-going crisis for American capitalism. Especially should it be remembered that it was Stalin who led the fight against the theory of American exceptionalism, as far back as 1928, when it began to be defended by Lovestone. Since then the Communist Party of the U.S. has been waging its main theoretical battles for the affirmation of Stalin's analysis of American capitalism, as against all bourgeois and social-fascist theories of American exceptionalism.

This battle has played a decisive role in the process of Bolshevizing the Communist Party and revolutionizing the American labor movement. It has made many converts to Communism. It has brought back to the Communist Party many of the followers of Lovestone. It has helped to expose the counter-revolutionary nature of Trotzkyism which also contested the Comintern thesis of the shattering of capitalist stabilization in the third period of post-War capitalism.

We can, therefore, only welcome the trend among American intellectuals towards accepting the Communist Party position on the general crisis of American capitalism, as part of world capitalism. And, though Mr. Corey does not indicate the Communist sources of his theoretical propositions, and, by some peculiar reticence, totally fails to refer to Stalin, the greatest living theoretical and political leader of the working class, whose guidance in exploding the bourgeois theory of American exceptionalism was decisive, and without whose works much that is valuable in Mr. Corey's book could not have been written, the general tenor of the book and its main purpose are to corroborate the Communist Party position on many important theoretical and practical questions. One reads the book with a feeling that it might have been a good Marxist work (the factual supporting material is there), had the author chosen to apply Marxism-Leninism *consistently*, without admixture and traces of ideas foreign and hostile to Leninism. As it is, we have in the book both Marxism-Leninism and—something which is not that. But the two do not blend; for Leninism, as Stalin characterized it with epigrammatic force, is the only Marxism of the imperialist era. The result is: wherever Mr. Corey adheres to Leninism (as, on the question of the N.R.A.), he handles the factual material correctly and reaches correct conclusions, confirming the Communist Party position. But, as he departs from Leninism by adding to it elements of

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other theories, he brings about confusion, and *weakens* his main thesis.

We shall now examine Mr. Corey's main thesis, which is stated in the summary of Part One (pp. 56-7). Basing himself on Marx' theory of the growth of the organic composition of capital, the author shows that the contradictions of capital accumulation result in an over-production of capital goods which is the cause of capitalism's cyclical crises. While capitalism was in the ascendent phase, "every depression was succeeded by a new upsurge of prosperity because of the *long-time factors of economic expansion*" (our emphasis). But as "all the long-time factors of expansion *approach exhaustion*, capitalism begins to decline because it is no longer able to produce and absorb an increasing output of capital goods. The decline of capitalism is an expression of old age, of a crisis in its historical development: one social system grows into another" (our emphasis). Proceeding from this general thesis, applicable to all capitalist countries, Mr. Corey concludes:

> "The decline of American capitalism is conditioned *by the exhaustion of the inner long-time factors of expansion.* This exhaustion, which is relative and wholly capitalist, was brought to a head by the prosperity of the 'Golden Age' of American capitalism. It assumed the form of overdevelopment of productive forces, saturation of capital plant, monopoly, the export of capital, and imperialism" (our emphasis).

Here then we have Mr. Corey's idea of the economic roots of imperialism. These roots derive from the fact that the "long-time factors of economic expansion approach exhaustion". What are these factors of economic expansion? Mr. Corey lists them as follows: "Mechanization of old industries, development of new industries, industrialization of new regions". According to Mr. Corey, these factors of economic expansion within the United States have become exhausted, and this is the economic basis of the decline of American capitalism, the economic essence of its present, imperialist, stage.

The question arises: What is that causes the long-time factors of economic expansion to approach exhaustion? On the nature of this process of exhaustion, Mr. Corey says, in what we have cited, that it "is relative and wholly capitalist". This, however, does not answer the question, which is: what is it *in capitalist development* that causes that exhaustion?

Mr. Corey comes back to the subject of "exhaustion" time and again. It is the *Leitmotif* of his book. Yet in no place does he answer this question. And without a satisfactory answer his main thesis, which is a statement of the economic roots of imperialism,

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falls to the ground. Certainly, what he presents as an answer cannot be taken as such. He writes:

> "As concentration and combination grow, there is an exhaustion (on a capitalist basis) of the inner long-time factors of expansion, resulting in a decreasing output and absorption of capital goods. Mass markets are still more limited. Excess capacity and surplus capital mount. The rate of profit threatens to fall disastrously. The outward thrust toward foreign outlets is strengthened. Speculation becomes more international. Capitalist production and foreign trade are more and more entangled with the economics of the export of capital and the politics of imperialism, with exploitation of the outer, the international, long-time factors of expansion. Monopoly capitalism and exploitation of economically backward peoples are inseparable." (pp. 416-7.)

Does this answer the question? Not at all. All it does is point out: (1) that the exhaustion takes place *concurrently* with the concentration and combination of capital; (2) that the exhaustion strengthens the urge toward outer expansion, the latter coinciding with monopoly capitalism and imperialism. This, however, only raises the question, namely: What relation, *besides* concurrent development, exists between the concentration of capital and the exhaustion of the inner long-time factors of economic expansion? Are these two developments related in any way to some third development? This question also remains unanswered.

Mr. Corey's conception of "exhaustion" *implies of necessity* another, more fundamental, idea. It is, namely, that economic expansion under capitalism (realization of surplus value and, hence, accumulation of capital) is possible only through the penetration of the capitalist mode of production into non-capitalist or pre-capitalist modes of production. As long as there are still to be found capitalistically undeveloped territories, capital accumulation grows and the development of capitalism proceeds upward. But as the capitalist mode of production expands, and the sphere of non-capitalist modes of production begins to disappear, there comes a halt to the accumulation of capital and to further economic expansion. With it begins the era of the decline of capitalism. This is the implied premise from which Mr. Corey proceeds to the formulation of his main thesis that it is the exhaustion of the long-time factors of expansion that causes the decline of capitalism, the era of imperialism. It is only as it derives from this premise that Mr. Corey's main thesis can make sense; for the implicit premise does offer a *cause* for the exhaustion of the long-time factors of expansion under capitalism: this is, the exhaustion of the spheres of non-capitalist and pre-capitalist modes of production.

By "adding" the idea of the "exhaustion" of the long-time factors of economic expansion to the Leninist theory of imperialism, the

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essence of which is monopoly capital, Mr. Corey has introduced confusion into the question and has weakened the *proof* for the decline of American capitalism. Bourgeois reviewers of his book have not been slow in seizing upon this weakness. Mr. William MacDonald (*New York Times Book Review*, September 9, 1934) is willing to accept Corey's thesis of "exhaustion" because it does not prevent him from attacking the revolutionary conclusions of the book. It may be true, says MacDonald, that capitalist expansion must cease "when there are no more economic worlds to conquer"; but then we can still have a capitalism without expansion. He concludes from Corey that "if a return to prosperity is still possible, even with life on a lower level and a less considerable scale, there would seem to be no reason why, in the interval, other ways of escape than Communism may not offer, or the alleged virtues of Communism to appear less real". The bourgeois reviewer uses Corey's wrong idea regarding the exhaustion of the long-time factors of economic expansion to attack Corey's conclusions of the inevitability of Socialism in the United States. Another reviewer (George Soule, *New Republic*, September 19, 1934), so friendly to Corey that he takes him under his protection against anticipated criticisms of the book by the Party, also attacks the idea of a Socialist outcome, and precisely from the angle of "exhaustion". He says: "Nor is it entirely clear from Mr. Corey's argument why capitalism has now reached the stage of decline. . . . This thesis seems to assume that all internal resources have now been exploited and that there are no new fields for foreign exploitation that will not lead to imperialist clashes and war. . . . There seems to be no material reason why another burst of accumulation cannot come to pass. . . ."

It is very significant that both these reviewers overlook in Corey's book those portions which state the *Marxist-Leninist* theory of imperialism and the proletarian revolution, but seize upon Corey's *additions* to Marxism-Leninism. And why do they do so? Because the Marxist-Leninist ideas of the book are invulnerable, while Corey's original theoretical "contributions", such as, the idea of "exhaustion", can be easily attacked, and through them, the idea of a Socialist outcome.

The idea of "exhaustion" is Corey's "addition" to Lenin. This idea resembles very closely certain features of Rosa Luxemburg's theory of imperialism. Mr. Corey has not developed her full theory; he "merely" adds certain features of this theory to Lenin. *The result is: Leninism with traces of Luxemburgism.* In other words, not Leninism. This will become clear through a brief survey of Luxemburg's theory. The theory was first formulated by Rosa Luxemburg in her most important economic work, *The Accumulation of Capital*, published in 1913. In her attempt to refute the

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revisionists' assertion that capitalist development is possible without crises, Rosa Luxemburg set up a basically wrong theory of imperialism:

> "The accumulation of capital requires for its motion an environment of non-capitalist social formations."* Consequently, "Imperialism as a whole is nothing else but a *specific* method of accumulation. Imperialism is the political expression of the process of capital accumulation in its competitive struggle for these remnants of the non-capitalist world milieu, against which no attachment has as yet been levied. However, the *inner* economic driving forces of imperialism may be more exactly defined: This much at any rate is clear and generally known: its essence consists precisely in the extension of the domination of capitalism from the old capitalist countries to new territories, and in the economic and political competitive struggle among those countries for such territories." (Quoted in: *Marxist Study Courses, Political Economy,* Pamphlet II, p. 37, International Publishers.)

Luxemburg's theory of imperialism has been shown to be faulty by Lenin, Stalin, and the Communist International on the following main grounds: (1) Her contention that accumulation is possible *only* by the expansion of capitalism into non-capitalist surroundings runs counter to Marx' theory of capital accumulation and reproduction. Marx has proved that surplus value realizes itself (hence, accumulation) through dealings between capitalists themselves. For the purpose of expanding production, capitalists buy from one another the commodities which embody the accumulated surplus value. In his analysis of the theoretical errors of the Populist economists in Russia, Lenin points out that "there is nothing more nonsensical than to try to deduce from these parts of *Capital* that Marx did not admit of the possibility of the realization of surplus value within capitalist society". (*Collected Works*, Vol. III, Page 32, Russian edition). (2) Luxemburg sees the *essence* of imperialism as the expansion of industrial capital into non-capitalist spheres. In this, she comes close to Kautsky's definition of imperialism as the policy of industrial capital towards non-industrial and agrarian countries. Lenin and Stalin have shown the utter fallacy of such conceptions. They have shown that the most characteristic feature of imperialism is the domination of *finance* capital (the merger of industrial capital with bank capital), and that the policy of conquest of finance capital is directed against all countries, industrial as well as agrarian. (3) According to Luxemburg's theory of accumulation, imperialism is a necessary attribute of capitalism in all its stages. Lenin has shown that imperialism is a *special stage* in the development of capitalism, the stage of monopoly capital. (4) According to Luxemburg, capitalism is preparing its own downfall by

* *Accumulation of Capital.*

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the "exhaustion" of the non-capitalist spheres of exploitation (compare Mr. Corey's "long-time factors of expansion"). True, Luxemburg also counted on the "rebellion of the international proletariat"; but in her theory the latter stands as a thing apart from the economic factors of capitalist development. In her theory the rebellion of the proletariat does not follow from the sharpening of the contradictions of capitalism in the imperialist stage. The result is an approximation to the Menshevik position of the automatic collapse of capitalism, a "semi-Menshevik theory of imperialism" (Stalin).

From this, it will become clear at what point of the discussion Mr. Corey has introduced definite traces of Luxemburg's theory of imperialism. His thesis of the "exhaustion" of the long-time factors of expansion is explicable only in terms of Luxemburg's exhaustion of the non-capitalist spheres This is basic. From this follows Mr. Corey's conception of "inner" and "outer" imperialism. He says that the expansion of the capitalist mode of production to the Western regions of the United States "may be conveniently described as *an inner* imperialism" (p. 421), and that by 1910 "a real outer imperialism was definitely and aggressively in operation" in the United States (p. 422). Why does Mr. Corey consider the conquest of the West an inner imperialism? Because the "economics" of this conquest "resembled those of the export of capital" (p. 421). Does not this "resemble" Luxemburg's theory that imperialism is nothing else but "a specific method of accumulation" which realizes itself "in the extension of the domination of capitalism from the old capitalist countries to new territories"? It bears, in fact, a close resemblance. The very *differentiation* of imperialism into inner and outer is possible only from Luxemburg's premise. Such a differentiation wipes off all the distinctive features of imperialism as a special epoch, as the highest and last stage of capitalism.

Mr. Corey resorts to the wrong conception of an inner imperialism in order to explain a certain peculiarity of American imperialism. "American imperialism lagged behind the European, although concentration, combination and finance capital were on the whole more highly developed than in Europe". Mr. Corey does not state clearly in what *particular respect* American imperialism lagged behind the European, but we presume that he had in mind the *disparity* between the high development of monopoly capital in the United States and its relatively few colonial possessions. He wishes to explain this disparity by an "inner imperialism" (the frontier); but, in so doing, he *explains away* imperialism itself, a la Luxemburg.

The disparity is a fact explained by Lenin long ago. It is explained by the working out of the law of *uneven development of capitalism*. American capitalism is one of the youngest among the big imperialist powers. Its tremendous and rapid forward leap to

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a first-rate position in the capitalist world can be understood only in connection with the equally rapid and catastrophic backward slide of British imperialism. These two events are conditioned by uneven development, which becomes especially acute in the imperialist era—the era of monopoly capital. It is due to this law that new imperialist powers, such as the U.S., are able to develop the technique of production with unheard-of rapidity, to cheapen their products, and to conquer markets at the expense of older imperialist powers. Imperialism, however, needs not just markets for its goods. It seeks primarily markets for the export of capital; sources of raw material; exclusive, monopolistic exploitation. But imperialism is that stage of capitalism in which the division of the world into spheres of exploitation has come to an end. And that was precisely the situation confronting American capitalism in the 1890's when it was rapidly maturing into the imperialist stage. It was from then on that American imperialism has waged a struggle for the acquisition of colonies. Lenin considered the Spanish-American War of 1898 (which, by the way, netted American imperialism a considerable colonial empire and great strategic outposts for conquests in the Caribbean, South America, and the Far East) as one of the chief milestones of the imperialist era.

This event apparently means little to Mr. Corey, who insists that a "real outer imperialism" began only with 1910, even though this contention does violence to historic facts. The reason is to be found in his theory that the "exhaustion" of the "inner long-time factors of expansion" was approaching by 1910 and that this "exhaustion" brought about "outer imperialism". The role of the frontier in the development of American capitalism is not explained but is confused by the conception of "inner" imperialism. The frontier is correctly explained by what Lenin called the two distinct processes of capitalist development: "(1) the development of capitalism in an old settled country or part of the country; (2) the development of capitalism on 'new land'. The first process expresses the further development of already formed capitalist relations; the second expresses the formation of new capitalist relations on new territory. The first process signifies the development of capitalism in depth, the second—in width" (*Collected Works*, Vol. III, p. 438, Russian edition). Mr. Corey himself makes use of this conception (extensive and intensive development of capitalism) in certain parts of his book when discussing the peculiarities of American capitalism. But he fails to make his theoretical ends meet because of his attempt *to add to Lenin admixtures of Luxemburg.*

Mr. Corey makes a serious methodological error. He ignores two basic principles of dialectics in the discussion of the factors of economic expansion: (1) the concrete historical nature of the sub-

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ject, and (2) its dialectical contradictions. Had he applied principle (1), he would have discovered that the factors of economic expansion do not constitute some fixed and predetermined quantity which capitalism "exhausts" in the course of its development, but that they (the factors of economic expansion) are created by capitalism *itself* in the *course* of its development; and had he applied principle (2), he would have found that, due to its contradictions, capitalism comes periodically into violent collision with the factors of economic expansion which it itself creates, that this collision constitutes the fundamental contradiction of capitalism—the contradiction between the productive forces and the production relations. Under imperialism, as defined by Lenin, the contradiction between capitalism and the factors of economic expansion created by itself becomes especially acute.

The substitution of a mechanistic method for dialectics has led Mr. Corey to give a non-concrete, non-historical and, hence, untrue picture of the latest phase of imperialism, dating from the first world imperialist war, which the Communist International has characterized as the *general crisis of capitalism*. Mr. Corey, too, speaks of the "crisis of the system". But with him this crisis is merely a *quantitative* continuation of the process of capitalist decay and decline which is a general feature of imperialism, the last stage of capitalism. We say this, notwithstanding the several expressions in Mr. Corey's book which might give a contrary impression. Mr. Corey tries to explain the depth and duration of "this depression (and all the European post-war depressions)" as "determined by a qualitative difference of the utmost historical importance" (p. 460). And what is this difference? It is that "former depressions were an aspect of the youth and upswing of capitalism; depression now is an aspect of its old age and decline". The meaning of this is that pre-War depressions took place under the capitalism of free competition while the post-War depressions occur in the era of monopoly capitalism, of imperialism. That this is Mr. Corey's meaning of the "qualitative" difference is seen from the following: "The qualitative difference expresses itself in two major developments: 1. The cyclical factors of recovery . . . are now hampered by all the 'controls' of 'organized' or monopoly capitalism, intensifying the depth of depression and postponing recovery. 2. The non-cyclical factors of long-time economic expansion are measurably exhausted. . . ." Clearly, Mr. Corey sees the qualitative difference between pre- and post-War capitalism in the fact that the latter, in distinction to the former, is imperialism. This view involves Mr. Corey in two major errors: he makes pre-War capitalism essentially non-imperialist (on what grounds, then, does he declare the first World War—an *imperialist* war?); and he treats as non-existent (in that he leaves undifferen-

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tiated) the general crisis of capitalism ushered in by the first World War and the proletarian revolution in Russia.

Mr. Corey has taken from Stalin (Report to 16th Congress of the C.P.S.U.) the very important idea that the world economic crisis, which has passed into a "special kind" of depression, is made especially painful and protracted by the efforts of the trusts to retain high monopoly prices upon their products. Why has not Mr. Corey taken more from the same source—the main idea? Comrade Stalin further pointed out in his report that the peculiarities of the world economic crisis are also determined by the chronic agricultural crisis and by "the *general crisis* of capitalism, which began during the period of the imperialist war, undermining the foundations of capitalism and facilitating the oncoming of the economic crisis". To ignore the fact that, with the first world imperialist war, imperialism has entered a *new phase*, the phase of the general crisis of capitalism, can only result in an abstract and scarcely convincing analysis of the decline of American capitalism. Such an analysis cannot be Marxian. It leads Mr. Corey to declare that in Europe a general *economic* crisis prevailed in the post-War period. He says: "The decline of capitalism was evident in Europe even before the crisis and depression which set in after 1929. A general economic crisis prevailed and cyclical prosperity was on a lower level than pre-War, while capitalism was crushed in the Soviet Union." But this is manifestly incorrect. European and American capitalism, that is, world capitalism, has, since the War, passed through three definite periods in which there were phases of *economic upswing* as well as depression. One of the features of the first years of the present, third, period was that capitalist economy went beyond the pre-War level, developing most rapidly the technique of mass production. This was true, not alone of American, but of world capitalism, as a whole. And it was precisely the *contradictions* of this upswing, *in the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism*, that undermined the relative stabilization of capitalism (second post-War period), leading to the end of this stabilization and to the close approach of the new cycle of wars and revolutions. These processes, stabilization and its end, were highly uneven in the various capitalist countries (for example, Germany and the United States), demonstrating the correctness of the theory of the "weakest link" in imperialism fully developed by Stalin. It is only by the law of uneven development, and the theory of the "weakest link" that one can correctly explain the differences and peculiarities of post-War American, as compared with those of European, capitalism.

Mr. Corey sees "*the* feature of post-War developments in the United States" in "the final transformation of competitive capitalism into monopoly capitalism and of monopoly capitalism into im-

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perialism" (p. 371). This is confusion, not scientific explanation. What Mr. Corey may have had in mind, seeking the main feature of post-War development in the U.S., is *the shift of the economic center of gravity to the U.S.* But why was this possible? Briefly, because of the working of the law of uneven development as it operates in the epoch of the general crisis of capitalism. Besides, what does Mr. Corey mean by the "transformation" of monopoly capitalism into imperialism? Proceeding from Lenin's theory of imperialism, we assert that monopoly capitalism *is* imperialism, its *essence*. Mr. Corey would seem to try to invalidate this Leninist idea. He would seem to suggest that there may be monopoly capitalism *without* imperialism.

This is economically and historically incorrect. But it also slides down dangerously near the Kautskyan conception of imperialism as a *policy*, which the capitalists may or may not adopt. That Mr. Corey is actually sliding down to this conception can be seen also from the following: "*To avoid the change*, which can be nothing else than socialism, monopoly capitalism *turns to* the export of capital and imperialism" (p. 434). In other words, monopoly capital *selects the road of imperialism* (a policy) in order to prevent Socialism. Peculiarly, Mr. Corey is moved to make such a declaration in an effort *to refute* the idea that imperialism is a policy. What happens, however, is this: he refutes this fallacy in words but commits it himself in deed. He becomes entangled, fails to make his ends meet, in the impossible attempt to build up his "own" theory of imperialism by adding traces of Luxemburg to Lenin.

The most glaring result of Mr. Corey's attempt at eclectic combinations, his main methodological errors discussed above, is the total failure to evaluate the role of the socialist system of the Soviet Union in the decline of American capitalism and of world capitalism. This failure to evaluate the role of the Socialist system of the Soviet Union seriously, let alone as a Marxist, the decline of American capitalism without analyzing and evaluating the struggle between the *two worlds*, the dying capitalism and the center of a new world system, the Socialist system of the Soviet Union? Not even bourgeois economists, if serious students of world affairs; not even serious capitalist politicians, fail to discuss the role of the Soviet Union in the fortunes of capitalist world economy. But Mr. Corey manages not to notice the "elephant". Is this an accident? Certainly, Mr. Corey is familiar with the fact that Lenin, Stalin, and the whole Communist International consider the contradictions and antagonisms between the two worlds the *central* antagonisms of the present epoch, the most potent single factor undermining capitalism and accelerating its decline. Mr. Corey undertakes to discuss the decline of American capitalism without taking account of this central contradiction,

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the struggle between the two worlds. Why? Has it not been demonstrated that the Soviet Union is the center of a new world system, the system of Socialism? Has it not been demonstrated, theoretically and in practice, that all world contradictions of today revolve around the contradiction between the growing Socialist world and the dying capitalist world? Is it not clear now, more than ever, due primarily to the Socialist achievements of the Soviet Union, that the latter is the greatest revolutionizing factor? We know of the existence of a contrary "theory". It is that the Soviet Union is economically becoming an "appendix" of, not a counter-force to, the capitalist system, and that politically it has "compromised" the world revolution. This is the counter-revolutionary theory of Trotzky. We want to assume that Mr. Corey does not share this "theory". But why, then, this surprising failure to see as a factor in the decline of American capitalism the struggle between the two worlds? It is this failure that helps us also to understand why Mr. Corey was able to "overlook" the general crisis of capitalism, its concrete historic characteristics, its phases and contradictions. It also helps to explain some of Mr. Corey's original "additions" to Lenin on the theory of the proletarian revolution.

Having excluded from consideration the general crisis of capitalism and its three periods—the only basis from which the maturing of the revolutionary crisis can be understood—Mr. Corey sets up the conception of "long- and short-time factors of revolution", evidently as correlatives of his long- and short-time factors of economic expansion. These long- and short-time factors of revolution are integrated into something which has all the appearances of a universal theory of revolutions, something quite akin to the "natural history" of revolutions against which he sets out to polemize. As is to be expected of such a non-Marxian (non-historic, non-concrete) method, the resulting universal theory of revolutions is devoid of all life and dialectical meaning. For, to set up a thesis of "the general unity of revolutions", to say that—"Unity is in the purpose, the conquest of political power and the consolidation of the new order; diversity is in the means adopted to accomplish the purpose and in the forms of the new order" (p. 544)—to say this, and to assume that these words build up a living theory of revolutions, or help in any way toward understanding the present period of a new cycle of wars and revolution, is to make a joke of the whole affair.

Marx, Engels, Lenin, and Stalin have built up the theory of the *proletarian* revolution. Because they used the method of dialectical materialism, their theory of the proletarian revolution is historical and concrete. Marxism-Leninism therefore distinguishes various types of revolutions *arising in the present epoch*. According to the Program of the Communist International, the world proletarian

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revolution is being made up of processes that are different both in kind and in point of time. These are: proletarian revolutions, revolutions of the bourgeois-democratic type growing over into proletarian revolutions, wars of national liberation, and colonial revolutions. "Only *in the last analysis* does the revolutionary process bring to the *world dictatorship of the proletariat*" (Program of the C.I.). This gives a true picture of the living dialectical processes of the proletarian revolution. Who needs, then, Mr. Corey's "general unity" theory of revolution?

Let us, however, examine this theory a little further. We read: "One of the most important aspects of the diversity of revolutions is *an acceleration of the revolutionary process*, progressively shortening the intervals between one revolution and another" (p. 545). Despite the abstractness of the author's italicized phrase, it is possible to see that what Mr. Corey had in mind was the process of development from a bourgeois-democratic revolution to the Socialist. Marx and Lenin, followed by Stalin, had analyzed this process as one of *growing over* of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the Socialist. Stalin has shown that Leninism views the bourgeois-democratic revolution and the Socialist revolution in the process of growing over "as two links of one chain". The class factor that unites the two links of the revolution is the *hegemony of the proletariat;* the class factor that differentiates them is the character of the *allies* of the proletariat. In the bourgeois-democratic revolution the proletariat has as its allies all the democratic, *anti-feudal* classes and groups of the population, chiefly the peasantry, the whole of it practically; in the Socialist revolution the proletariat has as its allies all the *anti-capitalist* classes and groups, chiefly the toiling peasantry, excluding the "kulaks", winning over the small, and sections of the middle, peasants, and neutralizing the rest. The rapidity of the growing over of the bourgeois-democratic revolution into the Socialist is determined in the present epoch, given a certain degree of industrial development in the country, by the hegemony of the proletariat in the revolution, by the organized strength of the proletariat and the influence of its Communist Party. In the colonial revolutions (bourgeois-democratic) the anti-imperialist factor assumes a first-rate importance.

Mr. Corey evidently is not satisfied with the adequacy of the Leninist theory of the "growing over". He prefers instead the abstract "acceleration of the revolutionary process" which tends *to gloss over* the role of the hegemony of the proletariat and the *difference* in the composition of its allies in the two links of the revolutionary process. For the hegemony of the proletariat and the leading role of the Communist Party, Mr. Corey substitutes an abstract entity which he calls "an increasingly purposive character in revolu-

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tion involving a larger awareness of purposes and means" (p. 545). On the decisive question of the allies of the proletariat, Mr. Corey has, in this connection, nothing to say. Why? Certainly, Mr. Corey knows of the existence of an anti-Leninist theory of revolution, Trotzky's theory of "permanent revolution". This theory is distinguished, among other things, by the fact that it discards the peasantry as an ally of the proletariat in the bourgeois-democratic revolution. Does Mr. Corey share these views?

Following out his formulation of "the acceleration of the revolutionary process", Mr. Corey develops some peculiar ideas about the objective and subjective prerequisites of the revolution. Again the method is abstract, non-historic and mechanistic. Instead of examining the present phase of the general crisis of capitalism—new cycle of wars and revolutions—Mr. Corey seeks the *general* objective factors that "accelerate the revolutionary process". This results in a superficial discussion of the general tempo of revolutionary development, and not in a Marxist-Leninist analysis of the maturing of the objective prerequisites of the revolution in the present historical moment. Nor do we get a scientific definition of the objective factors.

In the Leninist theory of the proletarian revolution we have a precise definition of a revolutionary situation and its objective and subjective prerequisites—a definition that rests on the Leninist theory of imperialism as the epoch of the proletarian revolution.

Lenin lists the following three factors as the objective prerequisites of a revolutionary situation: (1) The ruling classes can no longer rule as of old, a crisis on top; an unwillingness of the masses to live as of old. (2) An extraordinary sharpening of the misery and oppression under which the masses live. (3) A considerable heightening of the activity of the masses forced by all these conditions to independent historical action. Wherever all these factors, in totality, exist, there we have a revolutionary situation; the maturing of these factors signifies the maturing of a revolutionary situation.

But not every revolutionary situation results in revolution. For the latter, the maturity of a definitive subjective factor is necessary. This is "the ability of the revolutionary *class* to engage in revolutionary mass actions of sufficient *strength* to break . . . the old government whch will never 'fall', not even in the epoch of crises, if it is not 'dropped'" (Lenin, *The Collapse of the Second International*).

What does Mr. Corey give us on the question of the subjective factor of the revolution? "Subjectively, the acceleration of the revolutionary process is determined by the constantly more conscious and purposive factors in revolution" (p. 547). This is pale, indeed. And Mr. Corey does not help matters when he adds emphatically

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that "awareness becomes itself a social force". This only clothes in vague phraseology a very clear and historic idea of Marx that ideas become a force when they seize hold of the masses. The role of the revolutionary *class* is made vague in Mr. Corey's definition.

Wherein lies Mr. Corey's methodological error in this matter? It lies in the same sphere as his errors on the other questions. He sees the proletarian revolution as a process; but he views it mechanistically, not dialectically. He fails to see that in the imperialist era the question of the proletarian revolution is placed on the order of the day as a task of direct preparation for the struggle for power, which was not the case in the pre-imperialist era. Consequently, he treats the maturing of the prerequisites of a revolutionary situation as a continuous, uninterrupted process (development along a straight line) of capitalist development, instead of giving a complete, all-sided picture of the turns and twists of the maturing revolutionary crisis as it actually takes place in the present phase of the general crisis of capitalism. Here are the five "immediate" (!) factors of the revolutionary crisis, as Mr. Corey sees them: (1) Capitalist decline and decay—imperialism. (2) The upper bourgeoisie "clings to power and attempts to thrust the burden of decline upon the workers . . . Repressive measures are multiplied and *imperialism is intensified* as a way out of the crisis" (??). (3) The farmers suffer under the agricultural crisis "and must ally themselves" with some more powerful class. (4) Similarly with the middle class, the petty bourgeoisie. (5) The proletarians "emerge as a class conscious of itself and waging war upon capitalism, its awareness of purpose and means constantly broadening and deepening until it engages in the revolutionary struggle for power under Communist leadership" (pp. 548-49).

Will anyone recognize in the above the living process of the *present* maturing of the world revolutionary crisis? Of course not. The description of the revolutionary processes taking place in the proletariat (point 5) would fit the pre-imperialist era just as well, which means that it fits neither.

These fundamental errors lead the author inevitably to set up false positions on the most vital principles involved in the revolutionary program of the working class—on the attainment of Socialism, on the Party, on class alliances, on the national question, on democracy, on fascism.

How does Mr. Corey approach the question of the social order which, according to his thesis, must supplant capitalism? He declares Socialism to be inevitable. He makes clear, too, that he dissociates himself from those who tend to give a fatalistic and automatic meaning to the concept of the inevitability of Socialism. He stresses the subjective role of the revolutionary class and the leadership of the

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Party. But, in bidding us guard against the reformist theory of "growth into Socialism", he qualifies his acceptance of the inevitability of Socialism by counterposing inevitability "in the long run" against inevitability "in the short run":

> "Socialism is inevitable in the long run; humanity will not forever endure the oppression and decay of capitalist decline, and socialism is the only alternative. But socialism is *not* inevitable in the *short run*, and this is decisive in the practical revolutionary politics and struggles of the workers."

In this he adduces for his support a statement from Lenin:

> "Capitalism could (and very rightly) have been described as 'historically worn out' many decades ago, but this in no way removes the necessity of a very long and very hard struggle against capitalism at the present day. . . . The scale of the world's history is not reckoned by decades. Ten or twenty years sooner or later—from the point of view of the world-historical scale—makes no difference; from the point of view of world history it is a trifle, which cannot be even approximately reckoned. But this is just why it is a crying theoretical mistake in questions of practical politics to refer to the world-historical scale."

Since the author bases himself on Lenin for this thesis of Socialism "in the long run", it is necessary, in examining the thesis, to see with what validity he attributes it to Lenin.

The quotation is taken from *"Left"-Communism: An Infantile Disorder*, from the section dealing with the question of participating in bourgeois parliaments. Lenin polemizes against the German and Dutch "Left" Communists, who hold to the idea that "parliamentarism is historically and politically worn out". He warns against the infantile notion that because parliament has, in the historical sense, become worn out, it can, therefore, no longer serve the proletariat as an instrument of struggle. He points out further in the chapter that the Russian proletariat participated in bourgeois-democratic parliamentarism a few weeks before the victorious October Revolution—and even after the proletarian victory, in this way facilitating the political wearing out of bourgeois parliamentarism.

Lenin speaks here of parliamentarism having in mind the necessity of combining legal with illegal work *precisely because* the world proletariat must prepare *practically* for the Revolution. In the same chapter he declares:

> "In all civilized and advanced countries, the time is coming speedily when such unification becomes more and more, and, to an extent, has already become, obligatory for the party of the revolutionary proletariat. It is necessitated by the development and approach of the civil war between the proletariat and the bourgeoisie, by the furious persecution of Communists, by republican and all bourgeois governments generally, breaking the law in innumerable ways (the American example alone is invaluable)."

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One needs no clearer refutation of attempts such as Mr. Corey's to interpret Lenin's criticism of "Leftism" to mean Socialism "in the long run" than the following statement from Lenin's Preface to his *State and Revolution*, written three years before *"Left"-Communism*:

> "The question of the relation of a proletarian Socialist revolution to the state acquires, therefore, not only a practical political importance, but the importance of an *urgent problem of the day*, the problem of elucidating to the masses what they will have to do for their liberation from the yoke of capitalism *in the very near future*." (Emphasis ours.)

Quite a far cry from Mr. Corey's platonic "humanity will not forever endure . . . "!

What is involved here is the fundamental understanding of the Leninist characterization of the present stage of capitalism as the epoch of proletarian revolution—an understanding which Mr. Corey does not evidence because of the fallacies already noted in his work. Lenin's restoration and further development of revolutionary Marxism consisted precisely in that his analysis of the laws of imperialism demonstrated this epoch to be the last stage of capitalism *and the eve of proletarian revolutions*, in that he placed the question of the dictatorship of the proletariat on the order of the day. It is on this issue that social-democracy, with its variant theories of socialism "in the long run", surrendered to the bourgeoisie, substituting class collaboration for class struggle.

This in no way means that we should proceed without the realization of the efforts that capitalism will continue to make to maintain itself in power by the most desperate onslaughts upon the living conditions and the elementary rights of the toiling masses, by turning with intensified energies to the preparation of the new imperialist war and the attack upon the Soviet Union. On the contrary, we must recognize that these very onslaughts, developing as they do, revolutionary resistance and unity in the working class, manifest the supreme necessity for developing the subjective factors of the revolution. Now, more than ever, must we prepare the proletariat for assuming the tasks which the already existing objective preconditions for the revolution place upon it. But the efficacy of this preparation—the capacity to develop the tempo of the struggle, to develop the higher forms of mass struggle, to advance the requisite revolutionary slogans —depends directly upon our ability to see, on the basis of the Leninist law of uneven economic and political development under imperialism, the rapid maturing of the objective factors of the revolutionary crisis, arising from the accentuation of the general crisis of capitalism. In this sense, the E.C.C.I. at its Thirteenth Plenum declared to the world proletariat that we are closely approaching a new cycle of wars

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and revolutions; in this sense is the chief slogan of the Comintern today: Soviet Power!

What is the basic error that prevents the author from grasping the Leninist teaching on the march of the Revolution? Mr. Corey endeavors to base himself on Lenin's analysis of imperialism; but he loses sight of the decisive feature of imperialism, without which the dynamics of the final stage of capitalism cannot be conceived: namely, the pronouncedly uneven economic and political development of capitalism in the imperialist epoch. This is one of the fundamental principles which differentiate Leninism from the various social-democratic "theories" of imperialism. True, we find in the book references to uneven development; but these references are to the stage of capitalism when the process consisted of an effort at "levelling up"; for, uneven development is characteristic of capitalism in all its phases. But to pause at such a concept, that is, not to perceive the specific laws of motion operating in the accelerated uneven development during the monopoly-capitalist stage, is to fall into a mechanistic conception of this principle. There exists a contrary theory which denies Lenin's further development and concretization of the Marxian principle of uneven development of capitalism; but this, of course, is the theory of Trotzkyism.

Because he fails to see the heightened tempo and the increased complexity of the uneven development under imperialism, Mr. Corey does not sense the catastrophic ominousness of this process; does not anticipate the imminent armed clashes between classes and between powers which must weaken imperialism, and as a result of which, in the words of Stalin, "the world front of imperialism becomes easily vulnerable and can be broken through in some countries".

When we turn to the discussion of the correlation of forces in the class struggle—classes, parties, alliances, agencies—*The Decline of American Capitalism* reveals on this question a lack of clarity that, notwithstanding the author's evident plea for the Socialist solution of the capitalist crisis, fails to furnish a basis for the revolutionary way out.

It cannot be disputed that the Marxist-Leninist teaching on the class struggle and revolution is inextricably connected with the conception of the increasing misery of the working class in the process of capitalist accumulation. The denial or acceptance of this leading conception determines which path the working class shall follow—the way of capitulation to the bourgeoisie, or the road of proletarian revolution. We find, therefore, that this question was central in the struggle waged by revolutionary Marxism against both Bernstein's revisionist rejection and Kautsky's "orthodox defense" of Marxian fundamentals.

Mr. Corey would doubtless protest against the charge that he has

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either not understood or not accepted Marx's theory of increasing misery. Indeed, he might say: Do I not defend this teaching of Marx and say of it that it was "abandoned by his reformist 'disciples' and ridiculed by the bourgeois economists" (p. 486)? But let us see the construction that Mr. Corey puts on this teaching. The self-same sentence from which we have just quoted concludes with the words:

> "[The law of increasing misery] is a dialectical, not an absolute tendency: it does not move in a straight line, but contradictorily and unevenly."

In the first place, we find here the concepts *dialectical* and *absolute* set in opposition to each other, in a manner as to exclude the absolute from the dialectic process* and to conceive increasing misery solely as a relative movement, a la Kautsky. It may perhaps be argued that the ensuing words "it does not move in a straight line, but contradictorily and unevenly" render the antithetical employment of the word *dialectical* immune from such an interpretation, in the sense that the term *absolute* as here used implies the metaphysical absolute. The validity of such a contention remains to be proved in the further examination of Mr. Corey's treatment of the principle under discussion.

Mr. Corey builds his thesis of increasing misery on the division of the development of capitalist society into three epochs—the industrial revolution, the epoch of the upswing of capitalism, and the stage of capitalist decline, attempting to trace the Marxian law of increasing misery through each of these periods by analyzing the changing relationship of labor's productivity to production. He comes to the following conclusion: Misery grows with the lower levels of employment attending the early stage of the present system and diminishes as production rises, until, when capitalism is in its ascendant period, increasing misery becomes checked, only to resume its tendency, now in full force, when capitalism enters its decline.

Thus, he declares:

> "The industrial revolution was accompanied by increasing misery for the workers because the productivity of labor rose more than production. Displacement of labor was absolute, hours rose while wages fell, and a surplus population was created."

But, he argues:

> "In the epoch of the upswing of capitalism the tendency toward increasing misery was checked because production rose more than

* The absolute is not excluded from the dialectic process but is inherent in that process. Marx, the formulator of materialist dialectics, sums up his analysis of the nature of capitalist accumulation in the words: "*This is the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation.*"

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> the productivity of labor. Displacement of labor was primarily relative, wages rose while working hours fell, and some of the worst industrial abuses were wiped out. An offset, however, was the growing surplus population and increasing misery in countries being industrialized and in colonial lands.
>
> "The tendency toward increasing misery resumes its full force in the epoch of capitalist decline, because expansion is limited and the productivity of labor moves upward while production moves downward. Displacement of labor is now absolute. Disemployment and the surplus population grow. Wages and standards of living fall. Starvation mounts in the midst of abundance . . . " (p. 486).

In fine, we have here the theory that the law of increasing misery is valid for capitalism at its initial and declining stages, but tends to become inoperative, in fact is checked, when capitalism is at the height of its development and its accumulation progresses apace.

Mr. Corey has here fallen into the error of failing to perceive production in the light of the constant reproduction of the capital-relation. He sees the phenomenon of rising wages as denoting for the proletariat purely individual consumption, that is, the increase of the workers' means of subsistence for their own sake and not for their reconversion into labor power for renewed exploitation. In other words, he does not see the rise of wages as a factor in production, in increasing the source of profit for the capitalist; he does not see individual consumption of the worker as wage-slave who consumes productively, *i.e.*, by reproducing his condition as an appendage of capital; he sees the higher wage level only as improved means of livelihood for the workers' own enhancement. But, as Marx points out:

> "The fact that the laborer consumes his means of subsistence for his own purposes, and not to please the capitalist, has no bearing on the matter. The consumption of food by a beast of burden is none the less a necessary factor in the process of production because the beast enjoys what he eats. The maintenance and reproduction of the working class is, and must ever be, a necessary condition of the reproduction of capital." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 627.)

Once the rise in the subsistence level of the working class ceases to be taken as an independent factor but is beheld in its subjection to the process of capitalist accumulation, it becomes clear that, with the constantly heightened organic composition of capital, the extraction of relative surplus value intensifies the rate of exploitation, thus setting off the higher wage level with a greater intensity and productiveness of labor. In this way, the worker is made to pay with increased expenditure of labor power for his higher plane of subsistence, at a rate that far outstrips the gains in the living conditions. Therein lies the source of his increasing misery. If the life of the worker is one long, drab monotone of toil, machine-domineered, sapped of intellectual vitality; if his sense organs are impaired by

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the working conditions in the factory and his nerves shattered by the complexity and the tension of rationalization; if his productive age is shortened through the intensified rate of exploitation; if his life-span is cut off by unremitting speed-up—if "the instrument of labor strikes down the laborer"—these constitute but some of the forms of the over-compensation forced from him for the "higher" subsistence level.

It is the ruthless physical and mental degradation of the wage-slave in the course of the accumulation of capital that signifies the increasing misery of the working masses—a misery that grows absolutely as an objective process arising out of capitalist production itself. Herein lies the key to the understanding of Marx' words:

> "In proportion as capital accumulates, the lot of the laborer, be his payment high or low, must grow worse." (*Capital*, Vol. I, pp. 708-9.)

We see that for Marx the law of increasing misery is distinct from the question of rising or falling wages.

What is really Mr. Corey's error? The fact that he falls into the confusion of seeing in the factors making for a rising standard of living, factors that check progressive misery. He confuses the law of increasing misery with the question of higher or lower wages. He believes he bases himself on Marx by saying: "Marx himself analyzed the opposing forces (among them the labor movement)" (p. 486). But how does Marx conceive of these forces? Let us take his discussion (in *Value, Price, and Profit*) of working class organization as a counter-force to the encroachments of capital. Marx presents his conclusion, basing himself on his analysis of the heightened organic composition of capital:

> "The general tendency of capitalist production is not to raise, but to sink the average standard of wages."

As an opposing factor to this tendency, he speaks of the resistance of the workers through their trade-union action. But does he see in this organized resistance, as Mr. Corey supposes, a factor that succeeds in checking increasing misery? Marx cannot mean this when we bear in mind that for him the struggle for raising the wage level is but the struggle against the forward pressure of capital to beat down the given value of labor power. He specifically states in regard to the trade unions that, although they are centers of resistance to the encroachment of capital, they fail to check these encroachments, since they limit themselves to an attack on the effects and not at the roots of the existing mode of production (which, as has been seen, maintains itself by subjecting the working masses to increasing misery).

But, asks Marx, does this mean that these centers of resistance

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are valueless to the proletariat? No, he answers; they are manifestations of the unceasing struggle of the proletarians against their status as wage-slaves, manifestations of the historic revolutionary character of the proletariat. If these struggles were not carried on, as Marx says, the wage-workers would become "degraded wretches past salvation". Yet, in itself, the purely trade-union level of the struggle is insufficient, in that it does not use its forces as "a lever for the final emancipation of the working class". (*Value, Price, and Profit.*)

Marx, therefore, states emphatically:

> "The more or less favorable circumstances in which the wage-working class supports and multiplies itself, in no way alters the fundamental character of capitalist production." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 672.)

The fundamental character of capitalist production, involving as it does the general process of capitalist accumulation, brings about, as we have seen, the increasing misery of the working class. Or, as Marx put it:

> "But just as little as better clothing, food and treatment, and a larger peculium, do away with the exploitation of the slave, so little do they set aside that of the wage-worker. A rise in the price of labor, as a consequence of accumulation of capital, only means, in fact, that the length and weight of the golden chain the wage-worker has already forged for himself, allow of a relaxation of the tension of it." (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 677.)

But—and this Mr. Corey forgets—the chain, regardless of its temporary relaxation of tension, is in no way lessened either in length or in weight.

Yet, the argument may be advanced (and Mr. Corey's thesis advances it): if, as Marx holds, the general tendency of capitalist accumulation is to lower the average wage standard, how then shall we explain the apparent rise of that standard over a protracted period during the gigantic growth of capitalism in the second half of the past century?

The answer to this question, apart from the aforesaid over-compensation by increased expenditure of labor power, lies in the realization that the tendency to sink the average standard of wages took on during that period a temporary form in which extension was more pronounced than intensity—a modification that was soon to resolve itself, on the basis of that extension, into a higher intensity throughout the capitalist world. Marx himself offers the explanation in regard to a temporary improvement in the conditions of the laborers by stating that "the sphere of capital's exploitation and rule merely extends with its own dimensions and the number of its subjects". (*Capital*, Vol. I, p. 677.)

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It must be remembered that two main causes contributing to the higher average wage level, particularly of the English working class, during the stated period were, on the one hand, the diminution of the reserve army through the emigrations to new lands, and, on the other, the spoliation and terrific impoverishment of the colonial peoples, which brought into being the relatively favored labor aristocracy whose preferred status tended to be considered by bourgeois economists as the barometer of the entire working class level. Through the colonial policy of the capitalist class, however, the colonial peoples were now brought within the orbit of capitalism, and as such belonged to the toiling masses of the capitalist world. Their increased impoverishment more than represented the increased misery of the masses under capitalism. Likewise, Marx' teaching that the general tendency of capitalist production is to sink the average standard of wages, becomes even more evident when we view the capitalist system as a whole.

Mr. Corey mentions the increasing misery in the colonies and in countries being industrialized, but—only as an "offset" to the aforesaid "check" upon the increasing misery of the proletariat in the advanced capitalist countries (p. 486). In so reasoning, he gives evidence of not seeing, as Marx did, capitalist society as a whole, but of looking primarily and chiefly from the viewpoint of the advanced capitalist countries, in which a section of the working class was relatively better paid through the robbery of the colonial masses. Nor does he see the growth of official pauperism or the miserably underpaid sections of the working class in these very capitalist countries. He sees, indeed, "the epoch of the upswing of capitalism" in the roseate hue of the contemporary bourgeois ideology (reflected on the growing labor aristocracy and having begun to penetrate the socialist parties) anent a community of interests between the classes in the capitalist lands.

Mr. Corey cannot point to the declining stage of capitalism and say: But in the long run I come to the same conclusion; I recognize absolute increasing misery. For that which he claims to see as increasing misery is not what Marx meant by that term; it is not for Mr. Corey the *inalienable* absolute concomitant of capitalist exploitation. Mr. Corey fails to see that just as there is no check upon the absolute general law of capitalist accumulation, so is there no check upon the law of increasing misery, for the latter is a consequence of the former. Accumulation of capital is the independent factor that conditions the dependent factor, the accumulation of misery. Marx, indeed, speaks of certain modifications that his general law of capitalist accumulation on occasions, like all laws, tends to undergo, subject to various conditions. In this sense, too, can we speak of certain temporary modifications of the law of increasing misery. But

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does this mean that the law is checked? The very contrary is the case. The law asserts itself through these very modifications. Herein is involved the dialectic unity of the relative and the absolute. Hence it is impossible to speak of a check upon this law through an entire epoch. The modifications in the Marxian sense merely signify a necessary disturbance of the absolute law of capitalist accumulation which asserts itself precisely through this disturbance and which restores its equilibrium on a higher scale, that is, through greater accumulation. Corresponding to this restored equilibrium, the law of increasing misery also asserts itself on a higher scale—that is, catastrophically.

From Mr. Corey's "check" upon the Marxian law of absolute increasing misery in the ascendant stage of capitalist accumulation it would be impossible to understand the development of the class struggle through that entire period of capitalism. For it was in that very period that the proletariat in the process of its augmentation, engaged in forms of colossal struggle whose *material* basis was precisely the increasing misery of the masses. It was through those struggles that the working class was developing its mass trade unions and its independent political parties. The "check" seen by Mr. Corey is the very "check" that earlier provided the basis, in fact, for the growing opportunist tendency which, basing itself on the interests of the labor aristocracy, and the petty bourgeoisie, was soon to manifest itself in open revisionism and, eventually, in the capitulation of social-democracy to the revisionist position.

We have dealt at some length with this question because its significance lies in the fact that the recognition of the increasing misery of the masses under capitalism is bound up with the recognition of wage-labor as wage-slavery, with the understanding of the entire class antagonism which arises from the process of capitalist accumulation *in every one of its phases* and which leaves the working class no way out save the overthrow of the capitalist system.

In the light of this discussion we shall be enabled the better to approach the programmatic side of Mr. Corey's work.

(*To be continued.*)

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(*Owing to pressure of space, the concluding sections of the C.P. Cuba Resolution, the second installment of "The Leninist Struggle for the Slogan of Soviet Power in the Present Situation", by A. Martynov, and "Figures on the Economic Crisis", by Labor Research Association, have unavoidably had to be held until next month.—Ed.*)

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STATEMENT OF THE OWNERSHIP, MANAGEMENT, CIRCULATION, ETC. REQUIRED BY THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1933, OF THE COMMUNIST, published monthly at New York, N. Y., for October 1, 1934.

State of New York } ss.
County of New York }

Before me, a Notary Public in and for the State and county aforesaid, personally appeared W. E. Douglas, who, having been duly sworn according to law, deposes and says that he is the Business Manager of The Communist, and that the following is, to the best of his knowledge and belief, a true statement of the ownership, management (and if a daily paper, the circulation), etc., of the aforesaid publication for the date shown in the above caption, required by the Act of March 3, 1933, embodied in section 537, Postal Laws and Regulations, printed on the reverse of this form, to wit.

1. That the names and addresses of the publisher, editor, managing editor, and business managers are:

Publisher, Communist Party of U. S. A., 50 East 13th Street, New York, N. Y.

Editor, Earl Browder, 50 East 13th Street, New York, N. Y.

Managing Editor, None.

Business Manager, W. E. Douglas, 50 East 13th Street, New York, N. Y.

2. That the owner is: (If owned by a corporation, its name and address must be stated and also immediately thereunder the names and addresses of stockholders owning or holding one per cent or more of total amount of stock. If not owned by a corporation, the names and addresses of the individual owners must be given. If owned by a firm, company, or other unincorporated concern, its name and address, as well as those of each individual member, must be given.)

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Earl Browder, General Secretary, 50 East 13th Street, New York, N. Y.

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5. That the average number of copies of each issue of this publication sold or distributed through the mails or otherwise, to paid subscribers during the.... months preceding the date shown above is (This information is required from daily publications only.)

W. E. DOUGLAS, Business Manager.

(Seal)

Sworn to and subscribed before me this 1st day of October, 1934.

MAX KITZES, Notary Public.
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